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# In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

July 11, 1999



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**BY IRA SHORR**



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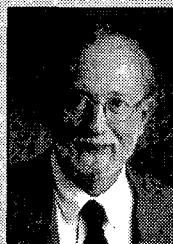
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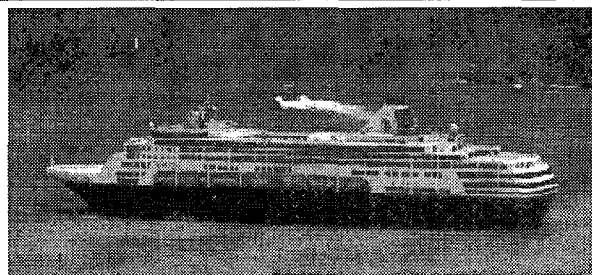


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		Valdez, AK	2:00 PM	7:00 PM
Aug. 31	Tue	Cruising Hubbard Glacier / <i>The Nation</i> Seminars		
Sept. 1	Wed	Sitka, AK	8:00 AM	6:00 PM
Sept. 2	Thu	Juneau, AK	8:00 AM	6:00 AM
Sept. 3	Fri	<i>The Nation</i> Seminars		
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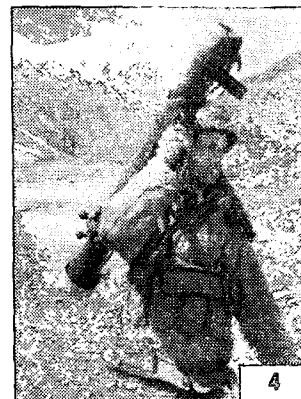
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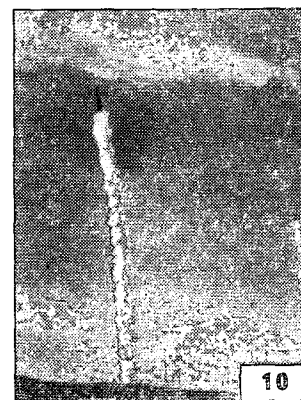
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# Letters

## Kosovo Questions

I write as a great fan of *In These Times* and its usual high quality to point out some disturbing lines of argument in Diana Johnstone's otherwise interesting article ("The War NATO Wanted," May 16). I agree with Johnstone that NATO, for a variety of reasons, pursued such a poorly conceived strategy of diplomacy that it can be reasonably argued that it in fact sought war. Johnstone, however, dulls her point by failing to offer any reasons NATO might do so, other than bloodthirstiness. I'm not familiar enough with the region to offer those reasons myself, but I believe that if the left wants to counter forces like NATO, we need to understand them as they see themselves—which is not, no matter how nasty they actually are, as killers.

Johnstone makes several other points in the article that open her argument to dismissal by those straddling the fence of sympathy with NATO (a large portion of the left, unfortunately). Yes, the most simplified accounts have compared Milosevic to Hitler (though I've not seen the charge of "reincarnation" anywhere). But a sophisticated supporter of NATO could easily use Johnstone's reproduction of this charge to suggest that she's not disputing them, but their crass supporters who are on the outside of policy-making. If we're going to press charges against the right, let's make sure they'll stick.

Johnstone goes on to describe the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) as "scarcely the sort of outfit one might to expect to see invited to a famous French chateau," which raises even my hackles—and I'm not a fan of the KLA. What

does she mean? Are only well-dressed bureaucrats fit to negotiate? That hardly seems like a position of the left.

Johnstone presents a great deal of useful, under-reported information in her article. Unfortunately, her wild swings at the straw men of the right may allow undecided or ignorant readers to dismiss her better points. Her smearing of the KLA—a group that does merit serious investigation and critique, woefully lacking here—mark her as prey to military propaganda of the Serbian variety. Such articles do a disservice to not only the credibility of the American left, but to Serbs and Kosovar Albanians as well.

**Jeff Sharlet  
Washington**

In your May 16 issue, Barbara Ehrenreich, George Kenney and, especially, Diana Johnstone all fail to see the central issue in Kosovo: the right of the oppressed national minority to determine its own destiny. The Albanian refugees disappear from all three analyses, which focus on the secondary issue of U.S.-Yugoslavian relations.

Johnstone is the worst of the three, essentially taking the Serbian side in a near-genocidal war against an innocent civilian population. She blames the victims for fighting back against their oppressors, not mentioning the massacres of entire villages, but stressing threats made by an individual KLA leader. She fails even to mention that the Albanian refugees themselves favor the NATO bombardment, and are pressing for a ground invasion.

**Mark Schneider  
Weymouth, Mass.**

It is difficult to subscribe to Diana Johnstone's take-no-prisoners condemnation of U.S. policy regarding Kosovo when she says virtually nothing about the key issue of motivation. Why have the United States and its "obedient NATO allies" pursued so dishonest and destructive a policy? Why is Morton Abramowitz so infatuated with the KLA, a "band of well-armed criminals"? Why did the United States, with malice aforethought, sink to a "low point in the history of diplomacy" at Rambouillet? And, at the very heart of any credible analysis, why has the overriding U.S. objective been to "launch a NATO war against the Serbs"? As long as these questions go unanswered, the Johnstone thesis remains, to use her own words about Western officials and media, "not to be trusted."

**Merritt Abrash  
Stephentown, N.Y.**

## Backing Bill

I'm disappointed in Christopher Hitchens' "His Place in History" (May 30). It seems to me a departure from what I have valued in *In These Times*—unslanted information. This is not the time to talk about Clinton's place in history. The subject of his wrongdoing has been beaten into the ground. It seems fairly obvious that the witch hunt carried out against Clinton has done more harm to the government than anything it uncovered possibly could have done. I have been thankful to have a president who appears to be at least trying to help the people of the United States cope with the modern world.

**Beatrice M. Wall  
Grinnell, Iowa**

**SYLVIA**

**By Nicole Hollander**





# Good News, for a Change

**T**elevision stations in Des Moines, Iowa, are currently airing a 30-second commercial, which says in part: "Hey, we could buy another new nuclear sub for \$3.5 billion or we could repair each and every school in Iowa. ... Why make a bunch of defense contractors richer? We already have the strongest navy in the world." Interspersed with images of too-cute school kids, the viewer sees a nuclear sub, a toppled statue of Lenin and a defense contractor grinning as he lights his cigar with a hundred dollar bill.

Our nation's defense establishment currently gets 51 percent of the money spent by Congress. In 2000, Congress plans to allocate even more of the nation's discretionary budget—approximately \$290 billion—to the Pentagon. That's a big reward for an industry that, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, spent \$23.3 million lobbying Congress in the first half of 1998. Does the military spending serve the interests of the majority of Americans? Of course not.

The ad is the first salvo in the Move Our Money campaign, which aims to make our nation's spending priorities an issue in the 2000 election, starting in Iowa. The effort is sponsored by Iowans for Sensible Priorities (ISP), the state affiliate of Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities (BLSP), an organization founded in 1996 by ice cream mogul Ben Cohen. Following the advice of Lawrence Korb, an assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration, BLSP advocates reducing the military budget by 15 percent (approximately \$40 billion a year) and investing the savings in "state and local priorities that will ensure a safe, strong and prosperous future for all of us."

In the next three years, the New York-based group plans to spend \$12 to \$15 million building a movement to demand a reordering of our national priorities. Money will be raised from the 450 members of the organization, among whom are actor and food impresario Paul Newman, Richard Foos of Rhino Records and Alan Hassenfeld, CEO of Hasbro Inc. BLSP also includes retired generals and admirals at the Center for Defense Information in Washington. Endorsements of the campaign have come from the likes of former CIA Director Stansfield Turner, former Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-N.H.), Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and former Chief U.S. Arms Negotiator Paul Warnke.

Cutting defense spending is popular with the electorate as well. A poll commissioned by BLSP of 1,000 voters found that 59 percent favored "cutting defense spending by 15 percent and investing the money in other priorities."

ISP hopes to turn that public support into a public statement by passing Move Our Money platform resolu-

tions in the Iowa caucuses next Feb. 7. The campaign will be helped along with a war chest of \$700,000—a sum comparable to the Iowa campaign budgets of the major presidential contenders—and salient data. (Iowans, through their federal taxes, each year send the equivalent of 65 percent of the state budget to the Pentagon.)

Move Our Money is not sitting well with the folks at Al Gore's headquarters. They fear that if the campaign motivates voters to attend their local caucus meetings, it will bode ill for their candidate, who is serving with a president who just pumped up the military budget. Peggy Huppert, campaign manager of ISP, acknowledges that the Gore camp is concerned the issue could benefit Bill Bradley. But she says the group is not endorsing candidates. What's more, the issue should be a natural for the vice-president. "Gore has talked about reinventing government," Huppert says, "but that has never reached the Pentagon, and the Pentagon is the part of government most in need of reinventing."

The trade-off between spending on defense and investing in social programs will soon be coming to a head. Since 1997, federal law has mandated that money could not be cut from the Pentagon's budget and added onto domestic spending, or vice versa. However, this year that firewall is scheduled to come down. Consequently, if the current budget caps are to remain

**"Why make a bunch of defense contractors richer? We already have the strongest navy in the world."**

in place, the additional \$19 billion in increased spending that Congress is requesting for the Pentagon in 2000 will have to come out of the domestic budget.

Where will the Republican Congress make cuts? Well, environmental protection, Headstart and mass transit programs consume \$17 billion a year.

The Move Our Money campaign could spark a national movement of citizens demanding a say in how their tax dollars are allocated. The challenge will be to translate those demands into real reforms.

In the early '80s the campaign for a nuclear freeze swept the nation. At the time, there were lots of good words from members of Congress but little action in the end. The freeze campaign, having consciously decided not to endorse candidates, failed to translate its public support into a political force that could hold lawmakers accountable on election day.

Democracy offers the promise for change, but without the right strategy there are no guarantees.

Joel Bleifuss



# The Price of Kashmir

By Ethirajan Anbarasan

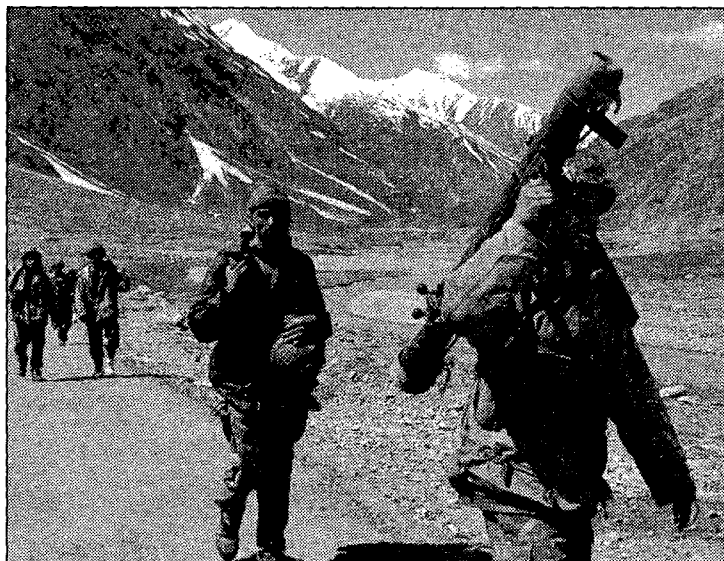
**J**ust a few months ago, there was widespread optimism about a new era in relations between bitter rivals and nuclear powers India and Pakistan. In February, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee embarked on a historic bus trip to Pakistan to meet his counterpart Nawaz Sharif and sign an unprecedented bilateral peace agreement. But the latest conflict in Kashmir, the long disputed Himalayan region, has dashed all hopes of peace.

In May, an estimated 600 well-armed freedom fighters—who India says were sent by the Pakistani army—occupied strategic mountain passes along the border in Kashmir and inflicted heavy casualties on Indian soldiers, killing more than 60 in three weeks of fighting. The Indian army responded with force, claiming responsibility for the deaths of more than 200 separatist guerrillas, some of them Pakistani soldiers, in battles at altitudes above 16,000 feet.

Pakistan maintains that it gives only moral and diplomatic support to Islamic militants fighting to liberate Muslim-dominated Kashmir from Indian control, and strongly denies providing any material assistance to the guerrillas. Islamabad says New Delhi is overreacting and using Kashmir as a pretext to launch an attack against Pakistani forces stationed across the disputed border.

The separatist groups, which also include recruits from Afghanistan and other hardline Islamic factions in the region, have been fighting Indian troops in Kashmir for the past 10 years, leaving more than 30,000 casualties on both sides. But the current occupation of an 87-mile stretch of strategic mountain passes near the town of Kargil could prove disastrous for the Indian forces. These passes overlook a strategic highway that connects Kashmir's capital,

Srinagar, with the western town of Leh, a military garrison bordering China. If the guerrillas succeed in holding their positions, they could destroy the highway and thereby leave Indian troops at the mercy of Chinese forces. Normally, these mountain positions remain unoccupied during the winter and Indian troops return to their bunkers every spring. However, when Indian troops tried to reach their positions in early May, they faced a fierce attack from guerrillas, who managed to settle in before the soldiers arrived.



Indian troops in Kashmir.

Unable to flush out the guerrillas, well-entrenched with snowmobiles—anti-aircraft missiles and backed by Pakistani artillery fire—India deployed its air force to Kashmir. Two Indian MIG jets were shot down by the Pakistani army on May 27, which claimed the aircraft entered its territory. One pilot died; the other was taken captive and later released as a sign of goodwill.

India and Pakistan have been at loggerheads over the predominantly Muslim state of Kashmir since 1947, when the partitioning of India paved the way for Hindu-dominated India and Muslim Pakistan. The Hindu Maharaja of Kashmir decided to become part of India, even though the majority of Kashmiris

were Muslim. Pakistanis insisted that as a Muslim-majority state, Kashmir should be part of their country. Wars were fought in 1948 and 1965 without a lasting resolution. A U.N.-imposed cease fire line, called the Line of Control (LOC), now separates the two nations, with troops eyeball-to-eyeball in many places along the 450-mile border.

One-third of Kashmir is under Pakistani rule. In Indian Kashmir, a separatist uprising with strong public support began a decade ago. But Indian forces ruthlessly crushed the guerrilla groups. The movement was reinvigorated when the fundamentalist Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1996. Together with Pakistan, the Taliban openly expressed support for the guerrilla movement. Foreign

mercenaries, mostly Afghans, were recruited to fight alongside the Kashmiris; Indian officials allege that Pakistan trains and arms these militants before sending them into Indian Kashmir. Border skirmishes and shelling along the LOC are now a regular occurrence.

Pakistan questions the validity of the LOC and wants international intervention in Kashmir. Islamabad recently requested envoys from the United Nations and Western nations. To their disappointment, India rejected a U.N. offer of international monitors. The United States urged Pakistan to respect the LOC, and Russia and France asked for an end to the intrusion.

Sharif—who already faces severe international criticism—is in a precarious situation. If Pakistan withdraws its support of the guerrillas, he would be blamed. The government would be seen as traitors in the eyes of Kashmiris living in Pakistan and fundamentalist Islamic groups. On the other hand, if Pakistan continues to supply the guerrillas, there is every possibility that India will increase its air strikes and target guerrilla bases inside Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Indian officials say the

KAMAL KISHORE/REUTERS



dispute in Kashmir was inevitable. The collapse of the coalition government led by Vajpayee and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in April paralyzed the government and merely delayed the conflict (see "India's Political Meltdown," May 30). Embarrassed and weakened, the BJP is using Kashmir to bolster public support in anticipation of the crucial September elections against the secular Congress Party and its popular leader, Sonia Gandhi. The BJP's hardline stance increases the chance that the conflict will spill across the Pakistani border and into a full-scale war.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the present conflict will be hawks on both sides. Already there are calls in India to upgrade the air force, and those who called for cuts in the defense budget have come under scathing attacks in the media. Whoever assumes power after the September elections will significantly increase the defense budget, a move which will be duly reciprocated by Pakistan. At the very least, India and Pakistan are set for a frightening arms race. ■

*Ethirajan Anbarasan is a Paris-based journalist who writes for the Press Trust of India (PTI), the national news agency of India, on international relations and strategic affairs.*

# Colombia's Private War

By Nick Rosen

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

**W**hen a man claiming to be Colombian paramilitary leader Carlos Castano landed his helicopter in the remote Colombian hamlet of La Gabarra on May 30, residents expected trouble. Castano is the commander of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), a prominent drug lord and perhaps the most feared man in the country. His forces have been responsible for the murder of thousands of union leaders, peasants, human rights workers and other suspected guerrilla sympathizers. His personal war against the guerrilla insurgency is largely responsible for the burgeoning internal refugee crisis—which now affects an estimated 1.5 million Colombians—as entire communities flee from AUC terror.

"We have come to clean this zone of guerrillas," Castano announced upon his arrival. Anticipating a massacre, a regional bishop visiting the village warned the Colombian authorities and the press that 400 of Castano's men had surrounded La Gabarra and were preparing to attack. He begged the state security forces to intervene.

But it was not until three days later that the Colombian military arrived in La Gabarra. By that time, at least 80 villagers had been slain and thousands more had fled across the border to Venezuela. Community leaders lambasted the government for failing to act in time to stop the killing. "The government, the army and the police all knew that the paramilitaries were here," one villager told reporters. "And they just left us here alone."

The La Gabarra massacre was not an isolated incident. Paramilitary terror has become an everyday occurrence in Colombia and government inaction is typical. Police and military forces have yet to take any serious armed action against the rapacious Castano and his death squads despite numerous warrants for his arrest and a \$1 million bounty for his capture.

The paramilitaries represent the most dangerous threat to a lasting peace in Colombia, which President Andres Pastrana's administration is attempting to forge with the guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). One of the FARC's principal demands is the dismantling of the paramilitary groups. The government's failure to concede caused the FARC to leave the table once already in January. The AUC responded by murdering more than 100 suspected "guerrilla sympathizers" in a three-day killing spree.

The stumbling negotiations seem to be the only way out of Colombia's guerrilla war, which sprang 35 years ago from abject poverty and an exclusionary political system, but has evolved into an intractable conflict marred by drug money and human rights atrocities on both sides. The Colombian military has proved unable to contain the growing strength of the FARC, who now control roughly 40 percent of the country—including prime coca land—and earn an estimated \$500 million annually through drug business and extortionary kidnappings.

*Continued on page 6*

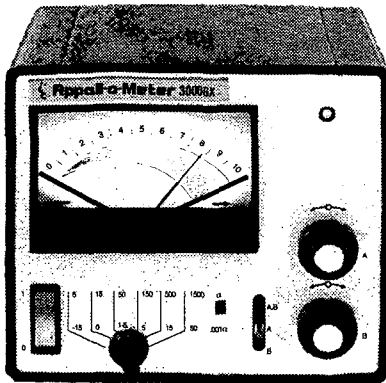
Terry LaBan





# Appall-o-Meter

By David Futrelle



## Beat It 9.1

How best to deal with violent kids? Beat the violence right out of them! Though many experts say that corporal punishment makes recalcitrant children more violent, the Oklahoma state legislature disagrees. In the wake of the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado, they passed a bill explicitly reminding parents that they are legally empowered to spank, paddle or whip especially naughty children. "Back when I grew up, we got our tails whipped at school, then got it again when we got home," explains Democratic Sen. Frank Shurden, author of the bill. "We didn't have shootings." But back

when Shurden grew up, it must be pointed out, much of Oklahoma didn't have indoor plumbing.

## Cabin Pressure 8.3

Nothing eases the fear of death like a nice creamy nougat. Passengers on a recent British Airways flight from San Francisco to London got a little surprise delivered along with their dinners—a recorded announcement telling them that the plane was about to crash into the ocean. It wasn't. The warning was triggered by mistake. But it took a little while for the plane's captain to acknowledge the mistake. One passenger told the *London Daily Telegraph* that it was 15 minutes or so before he came on the PA to announce that they were not headed for a watery grave. According to British Airways, the captain was "busy flying the plane at the time" and couldn't be bothered to make an announcement. The airline later offered a formal apology to the passengers for the mistaken announcement that "marred" the flight—along with boxes of chocolates to ease their pain. "If this is their idea of compensation, they can stick it," one of the

still-unhappy passengers told the *Telegraph*. "We all thought we were going to die."

## Game Over 5.5

Would-be video game censors in New Zealand are facing a dilemma: They aren't fast enough with their fingers to make it all the way through the games they're trying to censor. Since censors there are legally required to view every level of the games they wish to censor, they have contemplated requiring that game makers provide "cheat sheets" to help them do their jobs—or changing the rules so that censors wouldn't actually have to examine the materials quite so thoroughly.



Continued from page 5

In the early '80s, Castano's private armies grew out of the weakness of the Colombian military, as cattlemen and drug lords turned to the paramilitaries to prevent guerrilla incursions onto their land. The Colombian army has not only tolerated the paramilitaries, but has helped sustain them. As government forces came under increasing criticism for human rights violations in the early '90s, most of the "dirty work" in the war was assigned to the right-wing militias, allowing the government to officially distance itself from the torture, murder and kidnappings perpetrated by the "outlaw" paramilitaries.

What began as a side-show in the

counterinsurgency war now has taken center stage, as Castano has turned his band of thugs into a large fighting force that carries out more anti-guerrilla attacks than the army itself and controls a network of cocaine refining laboratories in northern Colombia.



AUC target Piedad Cordoba.

Indeed, it appears that Castano has outgrown his unofficial taskmasters. On May 21, a group of his men entered a medical clinic in Medellin and kidnapped Piedad Cordoba, a respected congresswoman and leader of the Human Rights Commission of the Colombian Senate. In a letter sent to Pastrana the following day, Castano demanded a role for the AUC in the peace negotia-

tions and that the dismantling of the paramilitary groups be removed from the dialogue. Cordoba was released two weeks later, but Castano's point had been made: The AUC would be respected, or else.

The U.S. government, which annually supplies Colombia with nearly \$300 million in military aid for counter-narcotics operations and commands a strong influence over policy-makers in Bogota, has denounced the crimes of the paramilitaries. But Washington has not put any serious pressure on Colombia to deal with the paramilitaries, nor made one dime of its aid package contingent on such actions. In Colombia, where the conflict has degraded into little more than a turf war, every U.S.-funded defeat of the guerrillas is a boon for the paramilitaries. If the growing power of Castano continues to go unchecked, the flow of Colombian drugs—and blood—will not ebb. ■

Nick Rosen is a journalist in Bogota.



# Drug War Prisoners

By Jim Shultz

COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA

The San Sebastian women's jail, a decaying adobe and brick building, sits across the street from a palm-tree-lined plaza filled with the sounds of passing traffic. Two hundred seventy women live behind its broken wooden doors. In April, four of these women picked up heavy sewing needles and thread and stitched their lips together until their mouths were sewn shut. Ten others crucified themselves—their hands and feet tied to the iron bars of a second floor balcony.

The other prisoners joined unanimously in a hunger strike that also swept through Cochabamba's three men's jails. The prisoners long had protested against the squalid conditions inside the jails and their being denied basic justice. Tired of waiting for lawyers and officials to deliver, the prisoners took control of their fate in the only way they saw possible.



A Bolivian inmate, mouth sewn shut.

More than 1,000 of the 1,380 men and women imprisoned in Cochabamba's five jails have not been sentenced, have never had the opportunity to defend themselves in court and have no idea when they might be released. Eight out of 10 are in jail as a direct result of the fight against Bolivia's coca leaf crop. All those arrested on drug-related offenses are prosecuted under a draconian law approved especially for the anti-drug effort. They are presumed guilty and jailed until trial, a rare event that takes years at best.

The drug law stands in direct violation of both the Bolivian Constitution and the U.N. Charter on Human Rights. It is, however, consistent with the U.S.-

sponsored war on drugs, in which the primary strategy is repression of poor farmers. Each year, the United States determines how many acres of coca crop the Bolivian government must destroy. If Bolivia fails to meet that goal, the United States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will cancel their aid. Crop-destruction expeditions carried out by Bolivian military and police forces have resulted in violent clashes with farmers. Last year, 13 unarmed farmers were killed.

The "guilty until proven innocent" drug law is widely believed to be another repressive policy developed through the U.S. embassy. Most drug offenders are jailed without any evidence of wrongdoing. Those transporting kerosene (an ingredient in the process that turns the coca leaf into cocaine), are routinely arrested for narcotrafficking. "But the police are so corrupt," says Hugo Montero Lara, a lawyer with the Cochabamba Assembly on Human Rights, "that you might just as easily be carrying gasoline for your car."

Many of Bolivia's prisoners are not incarcerated alone. In the women's jail, more than 200 children live with their mothers in abominable conditions. Actual cells are a luxury, going only to those who can afford them. Prisoners pay \$300, about one-tenth of a working Bolivian's annual salary, for a wooden cell barely the size of a single bed. Most prisoners sleep on mats in small concrete courtyards. The government provides less than \$11 a month per inmate for food, health care and other basics, far less than what it costs to survive. "If you are poor, without someone on the outside moving things for you," says an ex-prisoner named Antonio, "you are forgotten."

The striking prisoners demanded the release of those jailed without sentence and improvements in their living conditions. One month later, prisoners were presented with a draft agreement negotiated by government officials, human rights groups and the Catholic Church, which promised an immediate resolution

## Etc.

### Losing Choice

Anti-choice legislation is running rampant. On June 8, the House voted by a narrow 217 to 214 margin to ban abortifacients such as mifepristone, the abortion pill. During the debate, rabid anti-choice Republican Christopher Smith of New Jersey called the drug "baby pesticide." This is the second time the House has passed the ban. However, the Senate did not act on it last year and is unlikely to do so now (see "Reproductive Rights and Wrongs," March 21).

A day earlier, Texas became the thirty-eighth state to require parental notification when minors seek an abortion. Gov. George W. Bush used the opportunity to promote abstinence-only education, and to advocate more anti-choice legislation, including outlawing late-term abortions and state funding of abortion-related services. On May 28, a federal judge upheld a law in Wisconsin that bans late-term abortions.

### One Time Too Many

In the wake of the April 19 bombing that killed one civilian and wounded four others on a military range on Vieques, an island off the coast of Puerto Rico, the Navy also admitted to firing 263 shells loaded with depleted uranium (DU) during a training mission in February (see "60 Years of Hit and Miss," June 13).

Although the military says the DU mission was an "isolated, one-time incident," Puerto Ricans have reason to believe otherwise. Cancer rates on Vieques are more than twice as high as the rest of Puerto Rico. Protesters acting as human shields have occupied portions of the military zone since April, sleeping in hammocks tied to tanks.

Kristin Kolb

of 400 cases awaiting final sentencing by the Bolivian Supreme Court and reducing the time served by prisoners who demonstrate good behavior.

Prisoners have given officials one month to act on their promises or they say they will strike again, *hasta las ultimas consecuencias*—to the death. ■

Jim Shultz, the executive director of The Democracy Center ([www.democracyctr.org](http://www.democracyctr.org)) lives in Cochabamba.

# Guilty of Motherhood

**O**n May 19, Tabitha Walrond was convicted of negligent homicide in a Bronx, N.Y., courtroom for the tragic death of her 7-week-old son, Tyler. There were no marks of abuse on the baby's tiny body; he had not been shaken, beaten or left alone without supervision. The autopsy report indicated that Tyler died of malnutrition, despite his mother's conscientious efforts to breast feed him, and her unsuccessful attempts to obtain medical care after his birth.

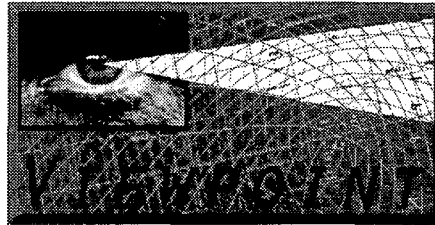
Tabitha is black, poor and unmarried. She was also a devoted mother who loved her infant son, and seemingly did her very best to take good care of him. But over the course of her three-week trial, Tabitha was stripped of her identity and her values to the point that, in her words, "I didn't recognize myself." In response to the prosecutor's character assassination, Tabitha pleaded, "Can't you hear what I am saying?" Apparently they could not. She was portrayed as a stereotype, a symbol, an unfortunate statistic—rather than a flesh-and-blood woman.

Who was Tabitha Walrond? By most measures, she was an exceptional young mother. She took night classes to complete her high school education, so, as she put it, "her son could be proud of her." She paid for natural childbirth classes out of her own pocket. And she didn't miss a single prenatal visit to her doctor. She read books about pregnancy, childbirth and parenting. And—unlike most teenage mothers who are not up to the challenge—she opted to breast feed, convinced this was best for her baby.

Nursing was difficult for Tabitha, and there were complications. For one thing, she was never told that the breast reduction surgery she had when she was 15 would compromise her ability to nurse. Nevertheless, she persevered, as frustrated nursing moms are urged to do. She even pumped breast milk when she was unable to nurse. In other words, she took her responsibility seriously.

The same cannot be said for the health care system. When Tabitha took Tyler to a clinic run by her HMO for a

follow-up visit, she was turned away because the baby's Medicaid card had not yet arrived in the mail. The frustrated young mother complained to a social worker and was assured the card would arrive soon. It did not arrive soon enough.



Given the circumstances, how was the prosecutor able to convince a jury to convict Tabitha? Essentially, what the prosecution did was erase the real black mother who sat before the jury over the course of the three-week trial, and reconstruct her as the personification of the unfit black mother, the sinister villain of "the black underclass."

This tapped into the pervasive stereotype—even among the black middle-class—that teenage mothers are lazy, promiscuous and negligent. Headlines tell the public about abandoned children in rodent-infested apartments, physical abuse and drug-dependent mothers with fatherless children.

As black feminist Patricia Hill Collins argues in her book *Fighting Words*: "Poor black women simultaneously become the symbols of what's wrong with America, and targets of social policy to shrink the government sector. Keeping icons such as the 'welfare queen,' the 'black matriarch' and the 'bad black mother' fixed in the public eye erases the workings of a [system] that produces black women's poverty and powerlessness."

For Tabitha, the truth seemed to matter less than the stereotypes and pre-conceived notions. In a complex case with numerous expert witnesses, it

took the jury just two and a half hours to arrive at their verdict. Explaining the verdict, prosecutors and jurors repeatedly insisted that whatever social workers, doctors, breast-feeding advocates and other members of the family did or did not do was irrelevant. Young women like Tabitha have no legitimate claims to make on the state to ensure their well-being. They bear sole responsibility for themselves and their children.

That responsibility, however, should not be confused with autonomy. Because even if they do take care of their children as best they can with what they have, the state still reserves the right to judge, prosecute and punish them if they fail. Under the terms of this new social contract, human services have been replaced by a burgeoning punishment industry. It wouldn't provide health care for Tyler, but the state has prepared a prison cell for his mother.

Tabitha will be sentenced on June 30. A handful of activists in New York,

**It wouldn't provide health care for Tyler, but the state has prepared a prison cell for his mother.**

including NOW, have mobilized around this case. Black feminists in the Black Radical Congress will be at Tabitha's sentencing hearing. Her lawyer, Susan Tipograph, is urging others to write letters to the judge asking that Tabitha's sentence be lenient. (Send letters to: Hon. Robert Straus, Bronx Supreme Court, 851 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10541.) An appeal is planned, and since Tipograph took this case pro bono, funds are needed. Many progressives stood with Anita Hill and Lani Guinier when they were maligned and vilified. The true test is whether we will stand with Tabitha Walrond. ■

Barbara Ransby teaches in the Department of African-American Studies at the University of Illinois-Chicago.



# Run Home, Hillary

**T**he Gore zealots—a cult so far limited to Marty Peretz and his band of sycophants at *The New Republic*—are warning that a Hillary Clinton Senate campaign would drain funds and attention from Al. This is not only sexist, it's deeply and demonstrably silly.

Al Gore is perfectly capable of raising his own funds, given nothing more than a cell phone and an open line to the Chinese military or the international Buddhist conspiracy. Fundraising is in fact the single great accomplishment of his seven years as vice president—other than inventing the Internet, that is. As for the argument that a Hillary race in New York will drain attention from Gore: *Anything* will take away attention from Gore, including a slow-drying patch of gray paint.

There are other, more compelling reasons, why a Hillary Senate race would be a mistake and a potential delusion for liberals, progressives and feminists. And I say this despite the fact that I would vote for anyone—even Bill Clinton himself—who stood a chance of beating Rudy “Robocop” Giuliani. First, the Hillary race, which now seems inevitable (she still hadn't actually announced when this went to press), is *prima facie* an insult to the democratic process. I refer to the small matter of carpet-bagging, which the pundits usually raise only to assess as a possible factor weighing against her. The problem isn't that Hillary is no more a New Yorker than a Hawaiian—never mind her new habit of wearing black in Manhattan and referring to Long Island's potatoes as one of “our agricultural resources.”

The problem lies in the assumption that anyone related to a president by blood or marriage deserves a state to call his or her own. Florida for Jeb Bush, Texas for George W. and now New York for Hillary Rodham. *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen terms this smugly royalist assumption *droit du seignora*. When the queen decides to run, Congresswoman and would-be Senator Nita Lowey steps

aside and the New York Democratic Party turns itself over to a putative resident of Arkansas. Because what is poor Hillary to do—languish in obscurity as a mere college president or head of a major foundation?



Now there are individuals so progressive and principled that I would happily encourage them to cross state lines with intent to legislate. But Hillary isn't one of them, and this is the second problem with her threatened Senate run: The woman stands

feminist than Barbara Bush. Hillary wrote a book about being nice to children but supported her husband's punitive version of welfare “reform,” even boasting about it in a 1996 appearance on *Larry King Live* as evidence of Bill's freedom from the taint of liberalism.

More recently, in pre-campaign mode, she offered the *New York Times Magazine* the following statement on the women-and-children theme: “I think it would be a very good thing ... for each of us to take a deep breath and think, you know, there but for the grace of God go I ... and how can I be an advocate for the kinds of things that working women and particularly single working moms or even stay-at-home moms or health care providers—whatever—how can I try to think of a way to make this community work as well as it

**The woman stands for no known principles, has no ideas and possesses no clear goal other than to remain in the spotlight by whatever means necessary.**

for no known principles, has no ideas and possesses no clear goal other than to remain in the spotlight by whatever means necessary—posing for *Vogue*, for example, or standing nobly by her staff-molester husband.

Take health reform, for which many liberals still think she deserves an A for effort. What she proposed was in effect to turn the health care system into a cluster of giant HMOs run by the top six insurance companies—Aetna, Prudential, etc.—which is like turning the keys to the convenience store over to the burglars. If this was “reform,” then hell is a step up from purgatory.

“But look at all she's done for women and children!” some of my feminist friends cry. As hard as I look though, I find only a *creme brulee* of soft-minded sentiment laced with the arsenic of betrayal. In her personal life and her public pronouncements, she's no more

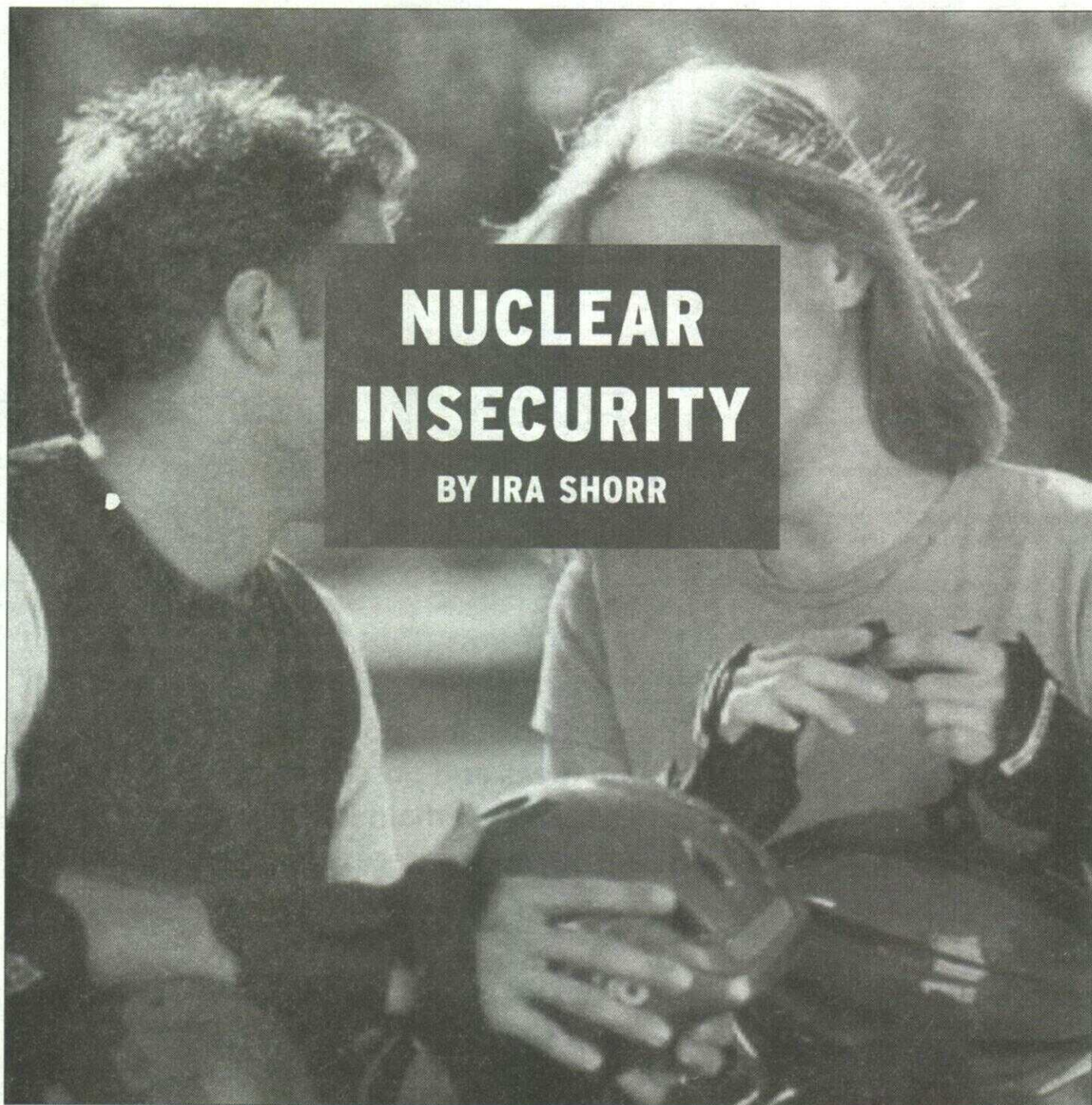
can work?” The operative word here being *whatever*.

In fact, unless Giuliani comes out officially against women and children, Hillary's big problem may be to distinguish herself from the champion of urban fascism. As *Time* put it: “In many ways, Rudy and Hillary will be battling each other on the same centrist policy terrain”—both being pro-welfare reform, pro-death penalty and, on the short positive side of the ledger, pro-choice.

This is why it might be better for all of us if Hillary took a deep breath, went home (wherever that might be), and didn't re-emerge until she had something to stand for other than pure, directionless ambition. ■

Barbara Ehrenreich is the author, most recently, of *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*.





# NUCLEAR INSECURITY

BY IRA SHORR

**F**ear of the bomb has become an exercise in nostalgia. Back in the early '80s, the specter of nuclear war spurred millions of people in Europe and the United States to take to the streets, demanding an end to the arms race. The thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert, loose talk of using them and ever-increasing tension between the United States and Soviet Union launched a decade of dissent that helped cap the Cold War. But the absence of public protest can't mask the fact that nuclear weapons still pose a serious threat to humanity—and the danger is growing.

Ironically, the nuclear threat to America now stems more from Russian weakness than strength. The vulnerable state of

Russian strategic forces, and the hair-trigger posture that still has both countries ready to launch thousands of nuclear weapons within minutes, means that a nuclear exchange could result from a simple misunderstanding. The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia has upped the ante, creating tension and uncertainty for a Russian military that, with no formidable conventional forces, has only the nuclear card to play.

"I believe the nuclear danger is higher today than ever before, even greater than it was during the Cuban Missile Crisis. At least they had time for the human survival instinct to kick in," says Arjun Makhijani, president of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, a Washington-area



think tank that deals with nuclear issues. "We have a super-power that has disintegrated, with a sick president, a collapsed economy, soldiers not getting paid—and they're the ones watching the radar screens. This time around there might be no chance for calculation."

Russia's economic collapse has wreaked havoc on its ability to detect a nuclear attack. Two-thirds of the country's early-warning system—both ground-based radar installations and satellites—are inactive or failing. "Russia is like a blind man in a dark room who has a gun and is afraid he's going to be attacked," says Theodore Postol, an MIT professor and former Pentagon adviser. "Moscow could be attacked and destroyed without any warning. What might Russian military planners be thinking in a time of crisis? The Pentagon should be nervous."

**W**hen it comes to the threat of nuclear attack, lack of accurate information is more than a theoretical problem. During the Cold War there were numerous incidents of equipment and software errors in missile warning systems that sent nuclear war planners scrambling. In June 1980, for example, U.S. nuclear command centers picked up what appeared to be an all-out Soviet missile attack. The United States quickly prepared to retaliate with bombers and Minuteman missiles before it discovered the false alarm, which eventually was traced to a computer chip error. The officer in charge agonized for eight minutes about whether the attack was real. He was later released from duty for not following regulations—which called for him to decide in three minutes.

The post-Cold War world offers no relief from nuclear uncertainty. Consider the case of the Norwegian research rocket launched on Jan. 25, 1995. Russian technicians picked up the rocket on their radar screens and, thinking it was a U.S. nuclear missile that could scatter eight nuclear bombs over Moscow, they prepared to retaliate. For the first time in history, they activated the "nuclear briefcase" that accompanies the president. Just a few minutes from a decision to launch their own missiles, the Russians determined that the rocket posed no threat and backed away from the nuclear button.

Not only do the Russians have to worry about their inability to detect a nuclear attack because of the sorry state of their early warning systems, but they also face the fact that the bulk of their nuclear missiles are sitting ducks. "Budget shortages prevent Russia from dispersing its weapons into the sanctuaries of the oceans and forests," Bruce Blair of the Brookings Institution, a former Minuteman Missile launch officer, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee last year. "Russia today in fact faces far stronger

pressures and incentives to use or lose its strategic nuclear arsenal than at any time since the early '60s."

The bottom line for Russian strategic nuclear planners is that they don't believe enough of their forces could survive a first strike to retaliate. Thus the Russians are prepared to "launch on warning" of an attack. And just as during the Cold War, U.S. nuclear posture is a mirror image of the Russians'. Each country has as many as 2,500 nuclear weapons on high alert status, meaning each side has less than 15 minutes to respond to a perceived attack.

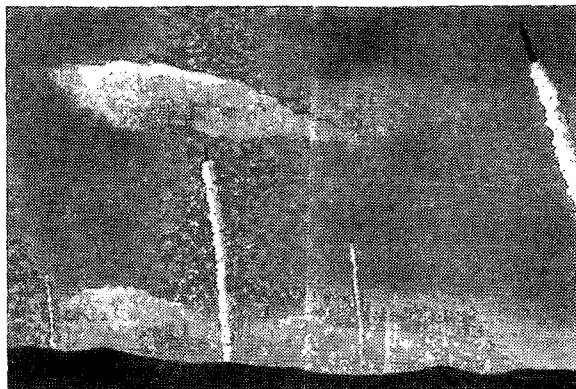
The official Russian response to the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia has been sobering. "If the question is to be or not to be for Russia, we must use everything we have in our armed forces, including nuclear weapons," Anatoly Kvashin, chief of the Russian general staff, told the Russian newspaper *Segodnya*. And former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Boris Yeltsin's special envoy for the Balkans, recently wrote in *The*

*Washington Post*, "The world has never in this decade been so close as now to the brink of nuclear war."

**O**ne way to back away from the brink is to make it harder to use nuclear weapons by taking them off hair-trigger alert status. This strategy of "de-alerting" aims to reduce the chance of an accidental nuclear war by increasing the time needed to prepare nuclear missiles for launching. The Brookings Institution's Blair has been an ardent proponent of de-alerting. He told Congress: "If Russian forces required many hours, days or longer to get ready for launch, then we would enjoy a larger margin of safety against many scenarios, ranging from the temporary loss of legitimate civilian control over Russian weapons, to the generation of false alarms in their early warning system."

Advocates of de-alerting have put forth detailed procedures to lengthen the nuclear fuse, which include removing and storing warheads away from their delivery systems; removing the guidance systems from missiles; and pinning open the switches that fire the missiles. Under a plan proposed by Blair, the United States could maintain a sufficient nuclear deterrent by having five submarines, undetectable at sea and carrying up to 480 warheads in a state of low alert, so that it would take 24

hours to prepare them for launch; the Russians could maintain similarly secure warheads on mobile launchers. "What we need are rapid and large reductions in nuclear forces," Postol says. "The goal is for both sides to have small, secure forces that aren't vulnerable to attack, so that there is no incentive to launch weapons rapidly."



STEVE ANDERSON

**"RUSSIA IS LIKE A BLIND MAN IN A DARK ROOM WHO HAS A GUN AND IS AFRAID HE'S GOING TO BE ATTACKED. THE PENTAGON SHOULD BE NERVOUS."**

# Y2K COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

**O**utrage over the NATO airstrikes has caused the Russians to suspend all military cooperation with the United States. And so another casualty of the conflict in Yugoslavia could be the joint nuclear command center at Cheyenne Mountain, Colo., that was to house Russian and U.S. technicians, in the hopes that sharing early warning information would guard against false alarms if the Y2K computer bug hits. If computers can't distinguish between 1900 and 2000, those who monitor nuclear weapons could have trouble distinguishing between a false alarm and a real attack.

While most nuclear weapons analysts say there's little chance that a computer foul-up would spark an accidental nuclear launch, there is concern that Y2K could bring computer malfunctions that lead to false warnings of a nuclear attack, or worse. As Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre told a House subcommittee, "We are less than optimistic that Russian early warning systems will function. It is possible that Russian computer screens could go black."

Michael Craig, a research analyst at the British American Security Information Council, was one of the first to sound the warning about Y2K and nuclear weapons in a November 1998 report, *The Bug in the Bomb*. Craig since has followed both Russian and U.S. efforts to beat back the bug. He says

that the Department of Defense has made progress in renovating their computer systems, but tested only the minimal number of systems needed to carry out their missions. "I'm concerned that the DOD is not getting a comprehensive enough picture of the inter-connection between systems," he says. "For example, they are not doing a pervasive study of the suppliers that provide for their electrical and telecommunication needs."

Craig points out that accidental nuclear war has been avoided in the past because of the ability of human beings to communicate with each other. "Let's say we're in a heated crisis, we put our nuclear weapons on alert and then our telecommunications went out," he says. "It could be interpreted as a Russian attack on our phone system."

The potential for such a disastrous miscalculation shows the importance of de-alerting nuclear weapons. "Why keep our weapons on hair-trigger alert?" Craig asks. "We should take a safety-first approach and lengthen the launch time."

There are those in Moscow who agree. Says Sergey Roguv, an adviser to the Russian Duma on Year 2000 issues, "Maybe the Year 2000 problem provides us with the impetus to go into the next century with an entirely different relationship of our two nuclear forces." **I.S.**

Disarmament advocates also promote on-site inspections and exact accounting and monitoring arrangements that would not only satisfy verification requirements—showing each side that the other's weapons really have been deactivated—but could enhance the security of nuclear stockpiles against theft and diversion to non-nuclear states or terrorists, a great benefit considering the sad state of Russian nuclear security.

But the split in U.S.-Russian relations over the NATO bombing appears to have torpedoed the chance for meaningful arms control. The Kremlin Security Council already has approved a plan to deploy thousands of tactical nuclear weapons that were unilaterally withdrawn at the end of the Cold War. While the Russians maintain the decision was made independent of the Kosovo conflict, *The Washington Post* reported that "other sources said the decision clearly reflected Russia's growing anxiety about the NATO airstrikes ... and continuing weakness in conventional, or non-nuclear weapons."

Also victim of the tense relations between the nuclear super powers is the START II treaty, which would cut the long-range nuclear arsenals on both sides from 6,000 each to less than 3,500 weapons. Ratified by the Senate in 1996, START II has languished in the Russian Duma. But disarmament advocates point out that the United States needn't be held hostage to the Duma's nuclear whims. A prominent group of arms control specialists—under the leadership of the Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington think tank—released a report in February calling on the United States to leapfrog START II and take the initiative in reducing the inherent dangers of the present nuclear standoff. The report, called *Jump-START*, recommends that the United States "immediately declare its intention to reduce, alongside Russia, to 1,000 deployed strategic nuclear weapons within a decade." In addition, the

report says, the United States and Russia should immediately de-alert the nuclear forces slated for destruction under the START II treaty, cutting the number of nuclear missiles on high alert from 2,500 on each side to 500.

Unilateral initiatives have worked before. In 1991, President Bush ordered the immediate de-alerting of hundreds of nuclear weapons. Mikhail Gorbachev reciprocated a week later, by deactivating hundreds of Russian missiles. But Congress and the Clinton administration are locked into the high-risk nuclear status quo. Congress even has mandated that the United States must maintain 6,000 nuclear warheads until the Russians ratify START II. Deep into the post-Cold War era, U.S. missiles are still aimed to destroy 2,000 to 3,000 targets in Russia. At the same time, Russia's nuclear stockpile is atrophying. Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev has predicted that, for economic reasons, Russia will have no more than 500 deployed strategic warheads by 2012.

But U.S. nuclear weapons policy remains on automatic pilot. The Clinton administration has showed little interest in redefining the status of nuclear weapons. It repeatedly has undermined the non-proliferation treaty by holding open the option of using weapons against non-nuclear states like Iraq. And it has shown no support for de-alerting, while downplaying the seriousness of the demise of Russia's early warning system.

MIT's Postol encourages the United States to help the Russians rebuild their early warning system by giving them the funding help to get critical satellites back in orbit. "The greatest danger we face," he says, "is not giving nuclear weapons issues the attention they demand." ■

*Ira Shorr is a journalist in Washington.*



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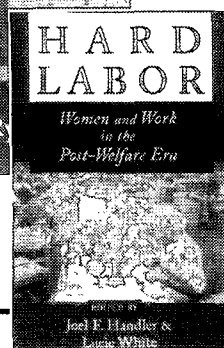
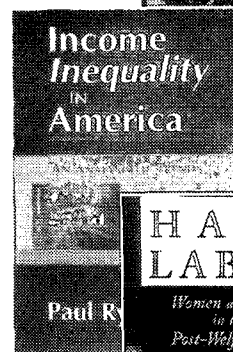
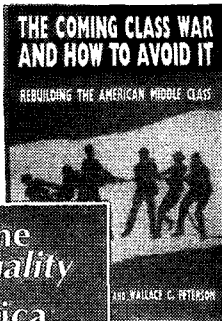
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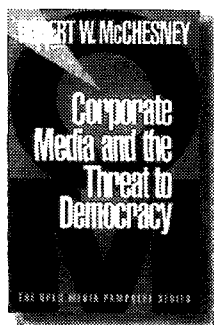
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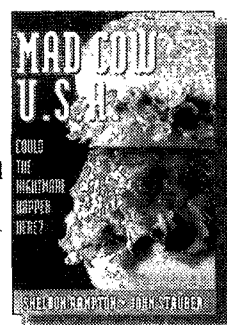


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# BALKAN WILD CARD

BY G. PASCAL ZACHARY

SKOPJE, MACEDONIA

As NATO leaders struggle to bring Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to heel, they seem unprepared to cope with a new wild card in the Balkans: the rising militancy among ethnic Albanians. Not only those displaced from Kosovo, but also Albanians in neighboring Macedonia, are determined to win independence and what they see as justice for the Albanian diaspora throughout the region.

To be sure, Milosevic's apparent capitulation reduces one set of challenges: It ends Serbian brutality in Kosovo without a divisive and bloody ground assault on the rump Yugoslavian state. At the same time, the outbreak of peace creates fresh

Macedonia and Kosovo. In normal times, he could drive from Skopje, Macedonia's capital, to Pristina, formerly the most vital city in Kosovo, in less than two hours. Because there is no accredited Albanian-language university in Macedonia, ethnic Albanians often attended school in Pristina and married women from there. Before the war, many of the Albanian elite here taught at the Pristina university.

The mingling of the two communities makes a mockery of the border that runs through this lush, mountainous region. It also wreaks havoc on personal lives. Muhamed's wife—an ethnic Albanian and Muslim like him—can't obtain citizen-



tensions, especially for Kosovars, who only can be disappointed that the peace pact, as publicly described, doesn't provide any means of self-determination for the roughly 2 million former residents of the province. In the weeks ahead, the biggest challenge for the Western alliance may not be disciplining Serbia, but managing the aspirations of ethnic Albanians who, after the traumas of expulsion from Kosovo, seem to possess a new consciousness of their destiny as a people.

In practice, keeping the lid on Albanian nationalism mainly means two things: ensuring that the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) doesn't scuttle the peace deal by continuing to mount violent attacks on Serbia, and holding together a fragile alliance in Macedonia between the dominant Slavic Christian group and the Muslim Albanians, who comprise about one-third of the country's population.

After dozens of interviews with ordinary Albanians and their leaders here, the overwhelming impression is that the Kosovo tragedy has the potential to turn aggrieved Albanians into the Palestinians of the next century.

What do we have to look forward to?" asks one Albanian who lives in Macedonia. "We are second-class citizens here, and even worse off in Kosovo. How do we build a future?"

Muhamed's situation is typical. His family has roots in

ship papers or a passport because her mother was born in Kosovo. As a result, his two children are stateless, even though they too were born in Skopje.

The denigration of Albanians in Macedonia doesn't stop with the denial of basic documents. They are subjected to relentless political surveillance by Slavic governmental officials. Albanians say they are more often the subject of police beatings, unwarranted arrests and random searches than the dominant Slavs. In one major outburst in July 1997, triggered by a government decision to temporarily ban the Albanian flag, police beat hundreds of people, following some into their homes. It is widely believed that police forced one man to eat his own hat.

Petty harassment is common. In December, six police officers visited the home of Hazbi Duraku, a shopkeeper who lives in Tetovo, the heart of the Albanian community in northwest Macedonia. When Duraku opened his front door, police barged in and searched his house for weapons, suggesting that he was a secret supporter of the KLA. Duraku said he had no weapons. The officers pulled out their own guns, pointed them at his children, and searched his house until they found a set of kitchen knives. "You can pick these up from the station," they told him. But Duraku, angry and humiliated, never did. Even after police taunted him on the



street about his missing knives, he refused to claim them.

Civil rights lawyers say few citizens complain because nothing is done. "Citizens can file suit if police overstep their authority, but courts won't act on these cases," says Mahmut Jusufi, an attorney in Tetovo who specializes in defending victims of police abuse. One typical case handled by Jusufi—where cops entered a man's house without a warrant and arrested him when he complained that he wasn't who they were looking for—hasn't been heard by a court 14 months after filing.

Even influential ethnic Albanians aren't exempt from police harassment. Consider the odd situation facing Nurtezan Ismaili, the ethnic Albanian mayor of Tetovo. His predecessor, also an ethnic Albanian, was jailed by police for flying an Albanian flag and then banned from politics as a condition of his release. "The ordinary police and the political police work together," Ismaili says. Pointing to the ceiling, he adds, "They are probably listening to us now as we talk."

especially those who live in Germany, Britain and elsewhere in Western Europe. With opportunities closed off in Yugoslavia since Milosevic declared an end to Kosovar autonomy in 1989, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians left in search of work, often returning home with money to start businesses or to maintain family attachments. That this Albanian diaspora would settle for a U.N. protectorate in Kosovo, rather than outright independence, is hard to imagine.

The KLA can't be ignored. They haven't expressed any plans for either reconstructing Kosovo or what its relations would be—following independence—with Albania and the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. Still, NATO must find some means of mollifying the KLA, so they don't carry on a doomed terror campaign against any settlement. For now, the price of KLA compliance isn't even that high: back their calls for a referendum within three years, whereby residents of Kosovo could vote either for autonomy within Yugoslavia or secession.



While Macedonia is often depicted as the one former Yugoslavian republic where a multi-ethnic society works, relations between Slavs and Albanians—the two main groups—are strained. "Albanians and Macedonians barely coexist," says Gilles de Rapper, a French anthropologist who has studied ethnic relations here. Adds Arben Xhaferi, the most respected Albanian politician in Macedonia: "In Macedonia, we have the marginalization of the Albanian. Here we are alone, and we have no [international] supporters."

It is this sense of isolation that could lead the Albanian community here to take up common cause with the Kosovars alienated by a peace settlement. The KLA—while poorly organized, politically incoherent and brutally suppressed by Serbia—managed to kill scores of Serbian police officers in the months leading up to the onset of the NATO bombing in late March. During the first weeks of the NATO campaign, the KLA seemed to justify complaints that it was a fanciful organization, consisting of disparate bands of fighters. But KLA attacks hurt the Serbs: In the last days of May, the guerrillas, operating in broad swaths of the province, forced thousands of Serb soldiers into the open, where they were hit by NATO bombs.

The publicity given the KLA, especially in the European press, has awarded it prestige among ordinary Albanians,

Yet at least in Macedonia, influential Albanians insist that the answer to the region's "Albanian" problem isn't redrawing the map, but ensuring rule of law and respect for minorities within Slavic societies. Xhaferi, for instance, has wagered his reputation on a plan—endorsed early this year by Macedonia's ruling coalition—to bring more Albanians into such key areas as the police, hospitals and cultural organizations.

This attempt at winning over Macedonia's discontented minority is risky; Slavs could turn against it at any time. But Xhaferi, a philosophy professor in the old Yugoslavia, knows the perils of such a path. Forced to leave Kosovo himself in the '80s, he understands—more clearly than U.S. and European policy-makers—that Albanians in the Balkans need more than just protection from persecution. They need real power over their lives. To whomever governs the nearly 3 million Albanians in Kosovo and neighboring Macedonia, Xhaferi offers some critical advice: "If citizens show more loyalty to the state than their ethnic group, the state will be more stable. But for that to happen here, the state must buy the loyalty of the Albanians." ■

G. Pascal Zachary lives in London. He is writing a book about identity, diversity and the strength of nations.

ZOHRA REUTERS

# Cleaning Up the Dirty War

By Travis Lea

## BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Justice in South America tends to mimic the pace of life: slow. That's why Rosa Roisinblit considers it a victory to see eight leaders of Argentina's "Dirty War" behind bars, 15 years after the repressive military government lost power.

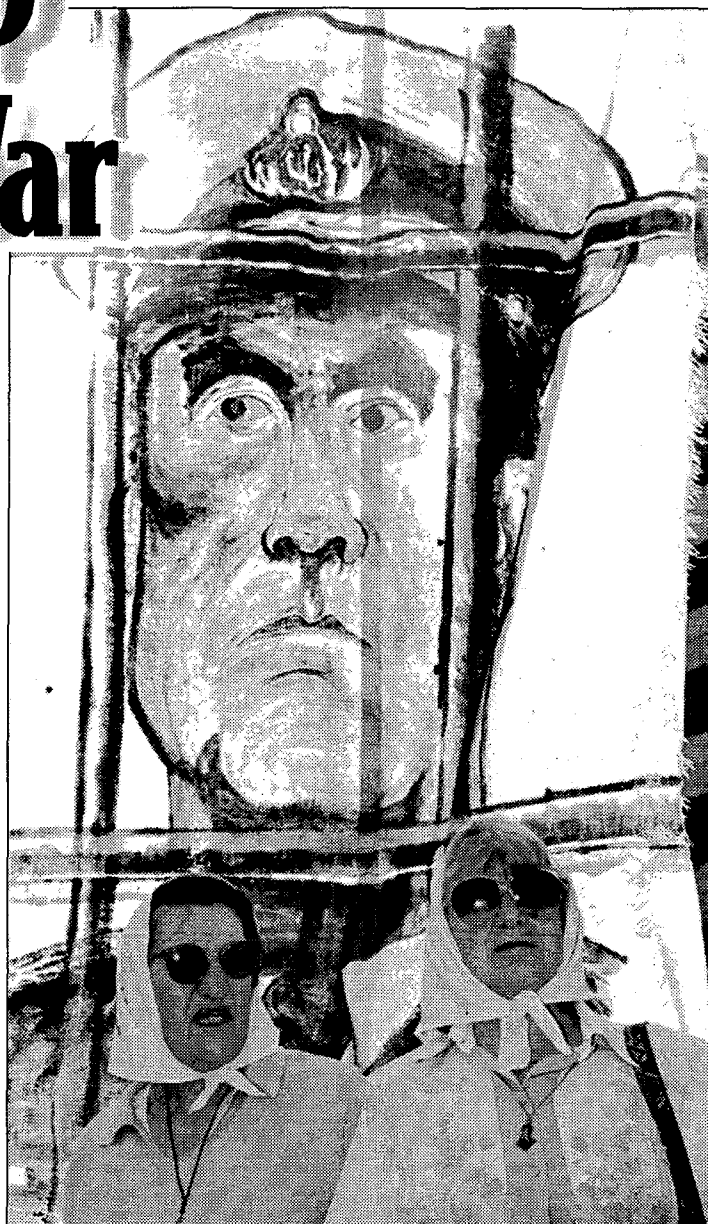
Roisinblit never intended to lead the life of a human rights crusader. Her daughter Patricia was eight months pregnant when she was kidnapped on Oct. 6, 1978. Like many mothers whose family members disappeared during Argentina's military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983, Roisinblit went to hospitals and police stations in search of her missing family. "I went to maternity wards to see if the child had been born there," says the 79-year-old. "Then I started going to orphanages and foundling homes ... but to no avail."

The Dirty War followed a century of vacillations between dictatorship and democracy in Argentina. In 1973, Juan Domingo Peron—the only leader with the influence to stabilize the country—had returned to lead the nation after nearly 20 years in exile. But his 1974 death left his inept wife Isabel in power until the beginning of 1976. In a void of leadership, amidst guerrilla activity and triple digit inflation, the military took power in an orchestrated coup.

The new regime promised order and economic stability. Then it began covert operations that coordinated the capture, torture, incarceration and execution of "subversives." By 1983, 30,000 Argentines had disappeared or been murdered.

In April 1977, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo began a weekly protest outside of the central government building that continues to this day. They demand a full accounting of the Dirty War's victims—their sons, daughters and grandchildren. With time, the protesters split into more distinct groups of directly affected victims: mothers, grandmothers, family and now children of the disappeared. During their protests, the mothers and grandmothers circle the square silently, dressed in characteristic white scarves and carrying large pictures of their missing family members.

In 1982, Argentina's weakening dictatorship—criticized for corruption and exponential inflation—suffered a fatal blow. England obliterated Argentine troops in the Falkland Islands, and the military regime quickly crumbled. It was succeeded by freely elected president Raúl Alfonsín, who initiated trials of the generals just months after they had been in power. The trials focused on the masterminds and archi-



NOTICIAS ARGENTINA/APP

**The Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo want Emilio Massera, head of the infamous Naval Mechanics School, to stay behind bars.**

ects of the military regime. By 1985, scores of military officers and their accomplices were behind bars for atrocities—torture, rape and murder. As the trials began to reach deeper into the ranks of soldiers, however, mid-level officers and functionaries rose up in violent demonstrations throughout the country, and Alfonsín backpedaled, passing laws that limited the scope of the trials.

In 1989, Carlos Menem was elected president. Menem, a flamboyant governor who was illegally imprisoned during the Dirty War along with many other *Peronistas*, didn't seem likely to sympathize with the military. But in 1990, he granted a full pardon to all the old military leaders in the name of national reconciliation.



Menem's pardon was a debilitating blow to the human rights movement in the entire region. It reinforced the cynicism that had been growing in the face of compromises and impunity in Chile, Paraguay and Bolivia. But the families of the disappeared rallied their forces, and eventually came up with a legal means to launch a new crusade for justice.

The theft of babies was not included in the amnesty law that Menem authored since those crimes were considered rare. In the mid-'90s, human rights groups picked up on this omission. They have worked to solve the disappearances despite obstacles set up by the political establishment. "We have been able to demonstrate that there was a systematic methodology," Roisinblit says. "Children were taken by written order from the highest to the lowest functionaries. So, we have been able to initiate lawsuits against those who had already been tried, condemned and freed by the [amnesty] laws."

As the grandmothers tell it, the dictatorship set up clandestine prisons to detain and question "subversives" about their activities. Some detainees, like Roisinblit's daughter Patricia, were pregnant when they were abducted, and gave birth in prison. Others, imprisoned for long periods, were impregnated in rapes by military guards or other prisoners. The military apparently did not have the heart to throw the babies out of planes and into the sea—as they'd done with their mothers, who they brazenly referred to as "incubators." Military officials established a formal system of forging the newborns' papers and giving them up for adoption. The Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo have documented more than 300 such cases, and thanks to their investigations, 63 adolescent Argentines have discovered their true identities as children of the disappeared.

Many of the babies were given to military families or their supporters. Often, these couples were sterile and childless, overjoyed at the chance to raise a child. Many youths, content with a good upbringing, are not willing to take a DNA test to determine who their biological parents are. In most of the adoptions, the parents knew what they were getting wrapped up in. But in 14 of the 63 resolved cases, the parents adopted the children through legitimate means, and were unknowing accomplices in the kidnapping. These children continue to live with their adopted families, but they know their real identities.

Roisinblit says she will follow that example when her grandchild is finally found. "After 21 years, I can't hold out hope that I'll find my daughter living," she says. "But my grandchild and all the other children, I'm sure they're still alive. The proof is that we're finding them. It's a tiring struggle." She repeats her daily resolve: "We'll continue looking for our children until the last days of our lives, no matter how old they are."

**Gen. Cristino Nicolaides, one the former leaders of Argentina's military dictatorship, has been indicted for his role in the systematic stealing of babies born to "subversives" during the Dirty War.**

**"We'll continue looking for our children until the last days of our lives, no matter how old they are."**

As a result of the new wave of investigations spearheaded by the grandmothers, some military leaders of the Dirty War have been put on trial. Eight of the highest ranking men have been given life sentences for kidnapping. Some of the most notable figures are Jorge Videla, the first dictator who came to power after the 1976 coup, and Emilio Massera, the head of the infamous Naval Mechanics School, the largest illegal detention and torture center, which also housed a birthing ward.

The Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo have used lesser crimes to bring down major criminals. "It's like Al Capone. After all the crimes he committed, he was imprisoned for tax evasion," says Tati Almeida, whose son disappeared in 1975. "In the case of Massera, who's being tried for kidnapping, he's being prosecuted for just two cases. But these two cases corroborate the genocide he's accused of. One kidnapping allows us to prove all the crimes he has committed."

The federal judge assigned to the case, Adolfo Bagnasco, is hesitant to admit its potentially broad scope. "I don't want this to be an instrument for other ends, something other than simply investigating the truth," he says.

The case of systematic kidnappings could explode in many new directions. The Catholic Church—believed by most to be a willing accomplice to the military's disappearance campaign—is considering opening its files on the Dirty War well before the required 30-year waiting period in a good-faith effort to help the courts in their search. And recent revelations by Jewish groups in Argentina and Israel suggest that the repression disproportionately targeted Jews. While they made up only 1 percent of the population, an estimated 12 percent of those who disappeared were Jewish. "I hope that Argentina can show that we have justice here," Bagnasco says, "All of the people involved have been or are being tried."

Although it is suspected that the regime kept meticulous records on the "subversives," investigators have failed to uncover those documents. Former Gen. Cristino Nicolaides, who played a role in the final years of the military government,



DIARIO CLARIN/AF

admitted earlier this year to having issued a command to burn such documents, but all other military personnel have denied knowledge of the order. The current army chief testified last month that Nicolaides is simply trying to shift the blame to his subordinates. But Nicolaides' testimony and damning words from some of the doctors who performed births at the Naval Mechanics School are giving hope to many South Americans that justice will be served.

Others are not so optimistic. Adolfo Perez-Esquivel, who was illegally imprisoned and tortured for nearly 14 months during Argentina's last military regime, was freed under international pressure and won the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize. Seated behind an old desk in his Buenos Aires office at SERPAJ, the Service for Peace and Justice, he stresses that the importance of the trials in Argentina is that they focus on systematic abuse. "If we think that Videla and Massera committed crimes because they were messed up in the head ... that's not how it is," Perez-Esquivel warns. "There was the complicity of business, of politicians, of journalists. It's a serious mistake to say there were a few evil leaders who committed crimes against their people."

Perez-Esquivel is trying to convince other human rights workers that the focus of governments and activists must shift to the systematic nature of the abuses carried out by the dictators. "What was the objective behind the torture and the disappearances? Where did the perpetrators of torture and genocide come from? Where did it all come from?"

He answers his own question: "It came from the world's so-called leader in democracy, the United States. The United States trained more than 80,000 personnel in the School of the Americas and in the military academies of the United States. They were the ones responsible for the coups, to protect the United States from political fears and to safeguard economic interests."

Human rights groups in Argentina contend the CIA continually provided logistical support to the dictatorships throughout the Southern Cone—coordinated via "Operation Condor," a covert international alliance of military regimes—to maintain governments that would cater to American priorities. From the U.S. perspective, the effort was overwhelmingly successful, as evidenced by strong new trade relationships that developed between North and South America during the '70s and '80s.

Bagnasco hopes that the precedent set by the kidnapping cases will prevent the free circulation of ex-dictators. The arrest of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet seems to support his theory. But other recent events stand in contradiction: On March 29, Paraguay's notorious ex-army chief Lino Oviedo obtained asylum in Argentina. Oviedo is wanted in his country for a 1996 coup attempt and for the recent murder of the vice president. And last month, Argentina denied an extradition request by Switzerland for Massera, claiming the application was tardy.

Still, most Argentines now support the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, whom they used to dismiss as "crazies." Argentines understand that they can't forget the Dirty War. "A people who loses its memory runs the risk that things will repeat themselves," Roisinblit says. "And we don't want these things to happen again." ■

Travis Lea is a writer and radio producer based in Buenos Aires.

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# Laissez-Faire No More

By Kim Phillips-Fein

I never dared be radical when young for fear it would make me conservative when old," wrote Robert Frost, and with good reason. From David Horowitz to Jay Lovestone, Whittaker Chambers to Germaine Greer, there have been more

## False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism

By John Gray  
The New Press  
262 pages, \$25

## Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market

By Pierre Bourdieu  
The New Press  
108 pages, \$12.95

than enough turncoat firebrands fervently denouncing their youthful foolishness to give anyone pause. It is rare, though, that one sees the opposite movement; after all, the right has money and power.

At first glance, John Gray, professor of European thought at the London School of Economics, appears to be a genuine ex-conservative. A decade ago, he was penning paeans to private property and the free market. He was an expert on Friedrich Hayek and wrote for Thatcherite think tanks. He celebrated Michael Oakeshott's vision of a "limited government under the rule of law that imposes no ideal on its subjects" and castigated Britain's Green Party for espousing "a Utopian disregard for economic laws." He was fond of noting that "market capitalism" is "the only successful variety" of modern industrial society.

But now the Cold War's over, and times have changed. Gray's new book, *False Dawn*, is a savage broadside attacking laissez-faire idealism. Though Gray once saw centralized economic planning as the paramount threat to liberal society, he now argues that the real danger facing the world is the unregulated global market.

*False Dawn* is a clumsily written book. The short paragraphs and arguments left hanging suggest the heavy hand of an editor who mistakes brevity for clarity, especially since Gray's articles on politics in the *Guardian* and the *Times* tend to be

much better written and more clearly argued. But somehow the book's awkwardness only makes it seem more authentic. Gray passionately argues that Thatcher's assault on the British welfare state exacerbated inequality in Britain and was a catastrophe for the poor. He's blisteringly critical of austerity in Mexico, saying it has inflicted "massive social and political damage with little, if any, benefit to the economy as a whole." His vision of post-Soviet Russia is an appropriately bleak one of free-market fanatics fighting with Mafiosos to preside over a shrinking population and collapsing economy.

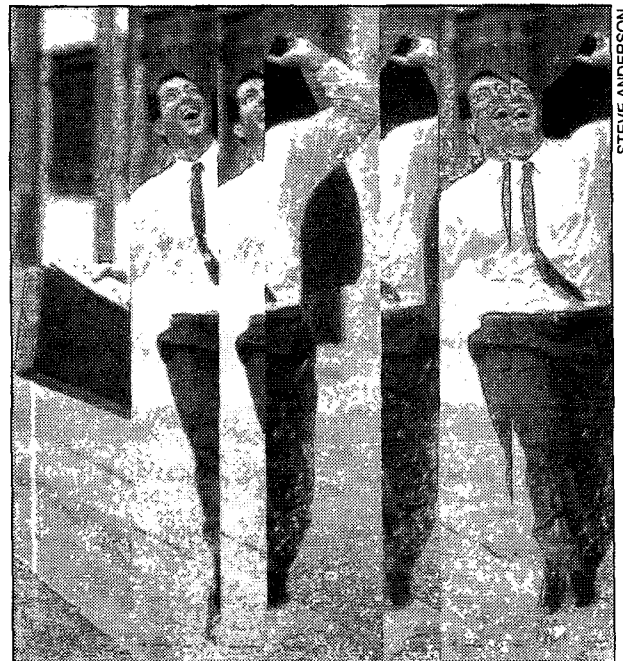
Yet Gray reserves his harshest jeremiads for the United States, which he sees as a society on the brink of disintegration. He denounces it as a society with "levels of economic inequality unknown since the 1920s and far in excess of those found in any other advanced industrial society today. [It is] an experiment in mass incarceration, accompanied by an elite retreat into walled proprietary communities."

The critique of neoliberalism is welcome, the image of the United States damning, and it's hard to complain when a Hayek fan comes to see the errors of his ways. But if one looks a little closer, it becomes clear that *False Dawn* is a fundamentally conservative work. On a deeper level, Gray hasn't changed his goals; he has just re-evaluated his tactics. For *False Dawn* is less a call to arms to the dispossessed than it is a wake-up call to the ruling class.

What drives Gray is not a genuine hatred of inequality, injustice or poverty, but a deep fear of political instability. His real fear about market society is that it erodes the social hierarchies it depends upon to reproduce itself, creating conditions ripe for war and political

upheaval. Internationally, conflicts between states cannot be resolved via commerce; the global marketplace is no substitute for imperialism. The United States' reluctance to commit troops around the world—one senses Gray would not be impressed by Kosovo—is testimony that the free market rots the martial ethos, producing a culture too weak to withstand the acid test of battle. "The liberal international order of the pre-1914 world depended on the ability and willingness of Britain to use naval power anywhere in the world," he writes. "No such willingness exists on the part of the United States today. ... Its population is unwilling to bear the financial and human costs of being an imperial regime."

At home, too, it's no longer so clear who's in control. Echoing Joseph Schumpeter, who thought capitalism's failure to found family dynasties was its most profound contradiction, Gray anxiously suggests that "the innermost



STEVE ANDERSON

contradiction of the free market is that it works to weaken the traditional social institutions on which it had depended in the past." The prosperous professional class, long a source of stability, is being squeezed into oblivion, as the bulwarks of middle-class morality—the secure career, the bourgeois family—are destroyed. Culture, ceasing to be a province of the virtuous classes, is becoming "antinomian and proletarian." The predicament of

chies linking men and women, rulers and ruled, rich and poor—which for Gray constitute social cohesion—are endangered by the free play of the market. “Not only the traditional family, but the class culture of deference and respectability which had been indispensable to the free market have been largely swept away,” he writes of Great Britain.

**T**hough Gray draws on Schumpeter, perhaps the key source for *False Dawn* is Austrian intellectual Karl Polanyi’s 1944 book, *The Great Transformation*, which Gray cites frequently. The basic argument of Polanyi’s book—an odd combination of anthropology and economic history—is that throughout most of human history, markets were subordinate to culture and society. But the “market economy,” which began in the 19th century, seeks to transform things that are not commodities—namely, human beings and natural resources—into goods to be bought and sold. It is therefore at odds with “society,” which rebels against the effort to so reduce labor and nature. Ultimately, the market economy proves fatally destructive of society, leading to war, chaos and fascism. Unlike Marx, Polanyi saw few benefits to capitalist development, and he suggested that “society” as a whole instinctively, unconsciously resists the “market pattern.” Not just the workers, but the elites too seek to protect society from its ravages. This back-and-forth between society and the market, he said, not the class struggle, is the motor of modern history.

Following Polanyi, Gray predicts that the free market will not produce a homogenous, peaceful world civilization, but only strife and violent conflict. Most important, he denies that the spread of the market is reducible to the class struggle. But instead of opposing “the market” and “society,” Gray goes a step further, identifying the market with Enlightenment utopianism and society with traditional culture and hierarchies.

A world united by free markets, Gray thinks, is the latest iteration of the Enlightenment vision of a global civilization. This is why *laissez-faire* is espoused by the “the world’s last great Enlightenment regime,” the United States: “The thinkers of the Enlightenment ... never doubted that the future for every nation in the

world was to accept some version of Western institutions and values. A diversity of cultures was not a permanent condition of human life. It was a stage on the way to universal civilization, in which the varied traditions and cultures of the past were superseded by a new, universal community founded on reason.” Gray darkly observes that neoliberalism is, in this respect, a close cousin of Marxism;

### **A reformed Thatcherite appeals to elites to come to their senses.**

both ideologies are arrogant, universalizing children of the Enlightenment.

The fatal mistake of Enlightenment rationalism is that it seeks to overthrow traditional hierarchies and deny cultural difference. For Gray, the welfare state represents the adaptation of traditional values to modern society. *Laissez-faire*, therefore, is an assault on tradition.

In an especially shallow section of the book, he tries to reduce the complex reasons some countries have developed regulations on the free market to static, stereotyped cultural differences. (For example, we are told that Japanese culture emphasizes trust and reciprocity, thus the lifetime commitments Japanese businesses make to their workers and vice versa.) What’s good for Americans is bad for the Japanese: “The United States would be wrong to try to emulate the singular practices of European or Asian capitalism—just as it is wrong to attempt to impose its own practices on them.” But instead of live-and-let-live, the United States, blinded by its vision of a harmonious globe united by the market, is trampling on venerable traditions around the world.

Against the onslaught, what can be done? Gray is quite clear: nothing. Social democracy, Third World protectionism, even garden-variety Keynesianism “are political projects that belong irrecoverably in the past.” The harsh rule of the international bond markets makes it impossible for states to govern effectively at all. In such a Hobbesian world, “international anarchy” is the certain outcome, to the ultimate destruction of the rich and

mighty. Although American companies might benefit from *laissez-faire* in the short run, they must watch out: “A global free market has no long-term winner.”

**F***alse Dawn* is a useful antidote to end-of-history claptrap. Gray’s skepticism about market proselytizers is welcome, and all the more effective since it comes from a former member of their ranks. When he observes that “organizing the world economy as a universal free market” means taking the rash bet that “the unintended consequence of the unfettered pursuit of profit” will be adequate to solve all kinds of difficult environmental, political and economic problems, it’s hard not to cheer him on. But a lingering nostalgia for aristocracy, and antipathy to the Enlightenment that philosophically overthrew it, isn’t much of a basis for political resistance to neoliberalism today. That Gray equates Marxism and free-market apologetics is actually quite telling. For one would hope that despite his anti-communism, he would notice that Marxism, for much of the 20th century, was used in workers’ movements and anti-colonial struggles, while neoliberalism is espoused by executives and bankers, shareholders and their talking heads.

It’s this indifference to politics that ultimately reveals Gray to be more conservative than he initially appears. For Gray’s real weakness is that he utterly fails to see neoliberalism as an ideology constructed to serve the ends of business. As he puts it, “global *laissez-faire* is not a conspiracy of corporate America.”

Instead, he implausibly tries to ram the history of the past two decades into the classical tragic narrative: Neoliberalism is a utopian dream espoused by well-meaning, naïve fools, who want only to do good and who will only do great harm. You can almost hear him pleading, “Forgive them, they know not what they do.” There are no social actors here, only an abstract idea that proceeds with an implacable logic of its own. This is, in large part, why his vision is so nihilistic and apocalyptic: We are expected to be spectators, not actors, in this drama. Global *laissez-faire*, far from a political program designed to strengthen and legitimate the rule of capital, is “a tragedy ... in which a hubristic ideology runs aground on enduring human needs that it has failed to comprehend.”



The enduring differences between left and right, even in the wake of the Cold War's end, emerge even more clearly if one reads left-wing French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu's attack on neoliberalism, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*. Sketched with a broad brush, Bourdieu's book seems so similar to *False Dawn* in its topic and critique that it almost throws the old lines of battle into doubt. If Gray and Bourdieu can agree on so much, what next?

Like Gray, Bourdieu worries about the rollback of the welfare state, the proletarianization of professional workers and about government becoming "a penal state concerned with repression and progressively abandoning its social functions of education, health, welfare." National governments seem to him to have little room to maneuver, being "subject to the risk of speculative assaults by agents wielding massive funds." But Bourdieu's little book—really a collection of his

writings for the press and speeches before various trade union federations—only superficially resembles *False Dawn*.

Bourdieu describes neoliberalism as a "myth" and a "utopia." But what kind of utopia? Behind the Enlightenment dream of Freedom, Equality and Property lies a hidden dystopia of "unlimited exploitation." Bourdieu sees neoliberalism first and foremost as a political strategy, which represents the interests of "shareholders, financial operators, industrialists, conservative politicians or social democrats converted to the cozy capitulations of laissez-faire." The rhetoric of "flexibility" (code for "night work, weekend work, irregular shifts, increased pressure, stress") and globalization barely masks an attack on workers that is not motivated by a foolish faith in the magic of free trade, but by canny and systematic awareness of class interest.

Not surprisingly, Bourdieu does not see the welfare state as modern-day

paternalism. For him, it is a prize only won after "several centuries of social struggle" for workers' dignity, and its defense is the kernel of a different kind of utopian vision, of a "social order which is not governed solely by the pursuit of selfish interest and individual profit." Its destruction can only benefit those who benefit from the exploitation of labor.

There's no tragedy here, but there are winners and losers. Rather than resignation or nihilism, there is a call to struggle. *Acts of Resistance* is a trenchant reminder that conservative squeamishness about markets is little more than a glimpse into the fevered nightmares of the elite; it doesn't offer a vision of a better world, nor a political program for how to get there. Let the Thatcherites keep their own. ■

Kim Phillips-Fein is a writer in New York and a contributing editor for *The Baffler*.



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## Atlas Shagged

By Scott McLemee

A confession: As a teenager, I read Ayn Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged* and the essays in *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* and *The Virtue of Selfishness*. Rand's advocacy of laissez-faire economic policy and her vision of rugged individualism changed the way I looked at the world. It also had an enormous emotional impact. "This," I thought, "is the silliest crap ever put to paper." And so a socialist was born.

For others who discover Rand as an adolescent, the encounter is no less passionate and decisive—though usually with a somewhat different outcome. Over the past 40 years, reading her work has become a rite of passage for young Americans on the cusp of adulthood. The novels are a fondly remembered initiation into the metaphysics of the profit motive, with enough sex to keep the characters busy between speeches. Rand's system of ideas (called Objectivism) demonstrates, with great philosophical rigor, that Looking Out for Number One is not just permissible but your absolute moral duty. When she

died in 1982, Rand was a major ideological influence on members of the Reagan administration. And her novels *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) still sell hundreds of thousands of copies per year.

A couple of years ago, the worshipful documentary *A Sense of Life* traced the whole length of Rand's story: from her birth in pre-revolutionary Russia through her emigration to the United States in 1926, on to her emergence as the greatest writer in the history of the world. Rather less hagiographic is *The Passion of Ayn Rand*—a biopic focusing on her affair with a young admirer, Nathaniel Branden. *A Sense of Life* shuffled past this matter with embarrassment. Its makers were forbidden by Rand's estate to interview Branden or his ex-wife, and the few minutes of screen time devoted to the relationship were cryptic and forgettable. Yet back in the mid-'80s, the Brandens published very thorough accounts of the affair. *The Passion of Ayn Rand* is a somewhat fictionalized adaptation of Barbara Branden's memoir of the same title.

**A**s *Passion* opens in 1950, Rand is a best-selling author happily married to Frank O'Connor, an actor she met when both of them worked as extras on a Cecil B. DeMille picture in the '20s. They are visited by a young college student, Nathan, and his girlfriend, Barbara—who, we soon learn, is not interested in sex. This is a point of conflict, as you might expect. But they share a passion for *The Fountainhead*, which both have read numerous times. After meeting Rand, they are abuzz with the sense of having encountered human genius incarnate. Nathan vows to make the psychological profession aware of her ideas. And he marries Barbara, which is an odd move, because she still doesn't like sex (or him, really). For emotional solace, each leans more and more on Ayn.

But Ayn has her own difficulties. She is working on a new masterpiece. A circle of devotees, with Nathan at its head, gathers to read *Atlas Shrugged* in manuscript. (Somehow *Passion's* script never mentions that one such enthusiast is the young Alan Greenspan). Even this adulation is not enough, though; so Ayn and Nathan announce they have fallen in love, and demand that their spouses permit the affair, in keeping with the Objectivist principles of Reason and creative genius. And to protect Ayn's reputation, they should keep this secret. Miserably, Barbara goes along. So does Frank, who begins slowly to drink himself to death.

Invigorated by athletic lovemaking, Ayn finishes *Atlas Shrugged*. Nathaniel launches a very successful course of lectures explaining her philosophy. The affair goes on hiatus, but Ayn pronounces Nathaniel her "intellectual heir." Meanwhile, the Objectivist philosophy of personal autonomy and free enterprise mutates into psychobabble of a nasty and manipulative sort. The group becomes cult-like—with Nathaniel superintending the mind games while Ayn observes with Olympian detachment.

Barbara watches all this. She is helpless and wears a pained expression. (You would scarcely guess from the film that she had as much to do with building the cult as her husband did.) When Ayn wants to resume the sexual relationship, Nathaniel suddenly finds their 25-year age difference a big turn-off, but assures her of his continu-

ing devotion. He keeps to himself the fact that he has fallen in love with another woman. When she learns of this affair, Rand is shattered, but cannot admit jealousy or any other such lowly emotion. Thus Nathaniel's betrayal is treason against Objectivism

**If ever a movie embodied Showtime's aesthetic of feverish softcore humping, Ayn Rand is it.**

itself! Or something like that. He becomes an un-person. And the final scenes reveal Ayn in her final years, as a celebrated author, still bearing the wounds of passion.

**B**esides having a credible physical resemblance to Rand, Helen Mirren's performance projects much of her strength and volatility: a larger-than-life figure squeezed into a small frame, with an excess of energy flashing out of piercing eyes. And Peter Fonda renders her husband as a sweet-natured and lost soul. Much less memorable are Eric Stoltz and Julie Delpy as the Brandens, though they do what they can with a script that is far less intelligent than Barbara Branden's memoir. *Passion* debuted earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival, and is bound to show up, sooner or later, at your video store. For now, it plays occasionally on Showtime, as seems appropriate—for if ever a movie embodied that network's aesthetic of feverish softcore humping, this is it.

Though news of it scarcely reached the outside world, the Rand-Branden dispute was traumatic for the Objectivists. At the time, few understood it. How could you reconcile Rand's persona as the embodiment of logic and intellect with the passions of an affair so unmistakably Oedipal in overtones? But as another (and much better) philosopher put it: The heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing. ■

Scott McLemee is a contributing editor for *Lingua Franca*.



*Crucifixion*, 1994, by Melanie Feerst. Feerst's new body of work, *Melancholia*, examines the power structures of 19th and 20th century medicine and explores the myths surrounding the modern disease of depression. On exhibit through June 26 at A.R.C. Gallery, Chicago.





# Summer Reading

Recommendations  
from the  
editors of  
**IN THESE TIMES**

## A Renaissance Revisited

Salim Muwakkil



In some ways, *The Crisis Reader* (Modern Library, \$14.95) is the perfect summer book. Full of historical substance, including insightful essays from some of the leading lights of African-American history, the volume is also varied enough to fulfill our need for hot-weather fare with a vivid collection of fiction, poetry and plays.

Much of the writing included in *The Crisis Reader* helped fuel the legendary Harlem Renaissance, one of the nation's most important movements for black cultural expression and political validation. From a period spanning the end of World War I to the dawning days of the Great Depression, there was an explosion of black creativity and intellectual foment centered primarily in a two-square-mile area of Uptown Manhattan called Harlem.

The NAACP lit the fuse of that explosion with the creation of *The Crisis* magazine in 1910. The group's board named W.E.B. Du Bois as editor-in-chief, and the magazine became the journal of record for the black writers and intellectuals who helped define the Harlem Renaissance. *The Crisis Reader* captures this spirit of social ferment and highlights the efforts of black writers determined to prove their mettle in a culture sodden with racist assumptions.

Writers and intellectuals like Charles Chestnutt, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Alain Locke, Arna Bontemps, E. Franklin Frazier and many more are included in this excellent compendium. Published as part of Modern Library's Harlem Renaissance Series, the *Reader* showcases the talents of African-Americans who ring no bells to most Americans—but laid the foundation for future generations of black literary artists.

Although *The Crisis* was ostensibly the NAACP's house organ, in truth it was a journal of Du Bois' concerns. Naming the publication after a poem by James Russell Lowell, he tackled all of the racial controversies of the era and developed the publication into an uncompromising voice for social justice. The journal was enormously popular. Its monthly circulation quickly increased from 9,000 in 1911 to about 100,000 in 1919. It remained relatively high until Du Bois left the publication and the NAACP in 1934.

Edited by Sondra Kathryn Wilson, a senior researcher at Harvard's W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, this collection contains material published from 1918 to 1930 and presents writing that is still strikingly original and confident. Hughes' poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" is a joy to read in whatever anthology it appears, but also included are excellent poems by lesser known talents like Effie Lee Newsome, Anne Spencer and Jessie Fauset. The volume's

short stories include pieces by Chestnutt, Fauset and Fenton Johnson that rival the best mainstream fiction of the era. William S. Braithwaite and James Weldon Johnson penned essays that examined black fiction writers' arduous struggle to gain the respect and attention of America's cultural arbiters.

Wilson writes in the introduction that *The Crisis* explicitly sought to "reclaim through art and literature the status of black America." As this book makes clear, their intentions were fulfilled. *The Crisis Reader* also offers instructive insight for why we still find ourselves struggling with issues of racial justice nearly nine decades after its founding. And the book performs this noble task with the kind of neighborly prose that is tailor made for the beach chairs and quiet nooks of summer vacations.

## Spies and Stylemeisters

Joe Knowles



I don't care what the cynics say. The late-'90s mania for Shakespeare, and Elizabethan culture in general, is wonderful. My only complaint is that Anthony Burgess' *A Dead Man in Deptford* (Carroll & Graf, \$11.95) missed the wave. First appearing in Britain shortly after Burgess' death in 1993, this final novel from one of the great writers of the 20th century did not get published in America until 1996—

and then only in paperback, by a relatively small house. (Critics on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as geeks who have been to Renaissance fairs, relished this period piece, but, perhaps because there was no movie deal with Miramax, nobody else seemed to care.)

*Deptford* is an endlessly intriguing speculation on the death of Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare's only worthy rival on the London stage. For centuries, the official take, repeated in the Oscar-winning *Shakespeare in Love*, has been that the rowdy and brash 29-year-old playwright was murdered because of a dispute over a bar tab. Knifed to death in a Deptford tavern he indeed was, but the facts of Kit Marlowe's life beg a fuller explanation. For he was not only a brilliant dramatist and poet, but also a spy with many dangerous friends. A subversive forerunner of the Enlightenment, he was notoriously skeptical of religion—not a wise position in the bloodily sectarian 16th century. And he probably had been carrying on a passionate affair with the nephew (and heir) of Sir Francis Walsingham, the head of the Queen's secret police and one of the most powerful men in all Europe. It's amazing that Marlowe even lived to 29.

Burgess, expertly and intoxicatingly assuming the Elizabethan dialect of a mysterious first-person narrator, follows Kit from his education at Cambridge to various spy missions in France, and to his triumphantly successful—but all too short-lived—career in the theater. The tale oozes with historical detail, period action, playful puns, Byzantine politics, literary gossip, spy-vs.-spy intrigue and rather a few scenes of pounding, furiously sweaty gay sex. Why isn't Miramax all over it?

And speaking of suspicious deaths, politics, coitus, espionage and literature: These are just a few of the topics John Leonard covers in his new essay collection, *When the Kissing Had To Stop: Cult Studs, Khmer Newts, Langley Spooks, Techno-Geeks, Video Drones, Author Gods, Serial Killers, Vampire Media, Alien Sperm-Suckers, Satanic Therapists, and Those of Us Who Hold a Left-Wing Grudge in the Post-Toasties New*

**World Hip-Hop** (The New Press, \$25). Leonard, formerly the literary co-editor of *The Nation* and a recovering editor of *The New York Times Book Review*, has a deep, impossibly knowing love of books—not to mention the semicolon—and his passion becomes contagious to any reader daring to go along for the ride, which is often pretty wild, funny and educational. (I should note here, in the interests of full disclosure, that this man also sort of helped spur my career by getting me started in the back pages of *The Nation*. But never mind that. It's a really good book.)

### Más Surrealista que Socialista

Joel Bleifuss



**F**or an adventure in summer reading, try *Dream with No Name: Contemporary Fiction from Cuba* (Seven Stories Press, \$16.95), a collection of 19 short stories that provides a variety of glimpses at present-day Cuba and explores the psyches of the island's inhabitants.

The most compelling stories confront life during the "special period," the years in the post-Soviet era when deprivation forced a hungry people to create an alternative economy based on the appropriation and sale of state and personal goods and services.

"The Waiting Room" by Arturo Arango, a tale of magical socialist realism, takes place in a bus station full of passengers but bereft of buses. As the wait becomes days, then months, the erstwhile travelers organize to deal with their social problems—ticket scalpers, exploitative food vendors, dirty toilets. The depot becomes a socialist paradise, an island where everything works on an island where nothing does.

"The Tropics" by Miguel Mejides examines the illusory allure of Cuba's resurgent semi-sanctioned sex industry. The story is told from the point of view of a German woman, who, on a visit to Cuba to "revive the senses," becomes entwined with a black hustler who is also a magician's apprentice. He disappears

and reappears, but she can't get rid of him. If she calls hotel security to get him out, he threatens to turn her in as a hash smoker. In Cuba, Mejides says, everyone must break the law (deal on the black market, prostitute themselves) to survive; everyone is guilty. As the magician tells his audience, "Nothing in the world is new, everything repeats itself."

Other stories explore sexual identity, the horror of war and Cuba's refreshingly open exploration of racial identity. Yet while this collection provides a portrait of contemporary Cuba, it is often frustratingly one-sided. Nowhere in this anthology is there any indication that Cuba is a police state, albeit of a softer, tropical variety. Lacking are the voices of those dissident revolutionaries, who, via hand-distributed mimeographed literary magazines, chronicle the absurdities of life in a contemporary Cuba held captive by the follies of its leaders.

### Sluts Anonymous

Kristin Kolb



**A** year and a half ago, we were introduced to Monica Lewinsky—"that woman," as her former lover fondly remembered her, or "that slut," as some of his liberal White House aides preferred.

Then, in the heat of Kenneth Starr's pornographic odyssey last fall, came along Miss Wendy Shalit, a 23-year-old self-described "virgin" who wrote a smug little manifesto called *A Return to Modesty*. Shalit disputes the existence of the sexual double standard, and believes ladies these days are pressured to explore their sexuality—making "romance" awfully messy. *The Weekly Standard* was enchanted. George Will was overwhelmed. Meanwhile, politicians were rallying for abstinence-only education in public schools and thousands of uneducated teenagers were getting STDs. Everyone was snickering about sluts, and gossip was vogue.

Leora Tanenbaum has injected some sobering reality into this sex obsession



with her new book, *Slut! Growing Up Female with a Bad Reputation* (Seven Stories Press, \$23.95). Tanenbaum, a columnist for the New York *Daily News*, was herself labeled a slut in high school, and takes apart the term in an acutely personal way. She peppers her analysis with stories from dozens of women recalling how as teenagers they became "sluts," how the label burned them—and coping made them stronger.

Who's a slut? Tanenbaum makes the excellent point that she doesn't have to be sexual, but is always an outsider of some sort. Cute and curvy, sometimes she's boy-crazy or brash, but usually she's poorer, or dresses and acts different from the other kids. "Slut" is the worst thing you can call a girl, she notes, and once you get the label you're banished.

Tanenbaum herself started developing early. By seventh grade, she wore a C cup. Boys ogled and poked her. Girls resented her. In ninth grade, she made out with the wrong guy (the crush of a more popular friend). He rarely spoke to her again. The rumors flew. No one spoke to her; everyone smirked, whispered and gave her "the look." She stopped going to lunch and hid in the library. She started wearing baggy clothes. She cried all the time, even in the middle of class.

Other women in the book—now successful lawyers, professors and writers—tell similar stories, with much more painful details. For me, memories came flooding back. When I broke out of my rural Missouri high school to start college a year early, my classmates spread rumors that I was really a pregnant dropout too embarrassed by my slutty behavior with a local "druggie" to come back to school. Luckily, I was 800 miles away when the gossip simmered.

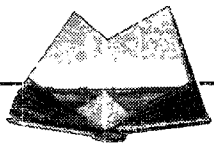
Tanenbaum's one shortcoming is focusing on high school experiences. She seems to believe that the transition to college is the moment of positive sexual awakening. But even at my alma mater—a liberal arts college that lauded itself as a bastion of liberalism—the catty gossip, "the looks" and the sluts were still there.

And at the workplace, in the papers and on Capitol Hill, unconventional

women are still poked, prodded and branded. But with Tanenbaum's book, now we can at least weigh in.

## Race Matters

Craig Aaron



"Could be worse," a Florida police officer caught on videotape tells a disgruntled white motorist he has pulled over. "Could be black."

How true. If current trends continue, one in four black men will serve prison time during his life. For every black man who graduates from college, 100 are arrested. While roughly 14 percent of drug users are black, African-Americans make up 35 percent of all drug arrests, 55 percent of all drug convictions and 74 percent of all jail sentences for drug offenses.

The scene and statistics, both from David Cole's *No Equal Justice* (The New Press, \$25) are a fraction of the evidence he presents in an open-and-shut case that our criminal justice system operates with a pervasive, morally wrong double standard—one set of rules for the privileged and another for racial minorities. "While our criminal justice system is explicitly based on the premise and promise of equality before the law," writes Cole, a Georgetown law professor and frequent contributor to *The Nation*. "The administration of criminal law—whether by the officer on the beat, the legislature or the Supreme Court—is in fact predicated on the exploitation of inequality."

He's not just saying that this double standard has been ignored. Indeed, Cole argues provocatively that we depend on inequality to keep the system going. We do this to balance competing interests: protection of constitutional rights vs. protection from crime. But where the line is drawn depends on the color of your skin. Intrusive practices (racial profiling traffic stops, ambiguous "drug courier profiles") and inadequate protections (only 2 percent of total state and feder-

al criminal justice expenditures go to indigent defense) are tolerated because they don't affect the privileged classes. But those who really need constitutional protections can't get them.

This is leading us on a downward spiral. Faced with such obvious inequality, Cole says, the law begins to lose its moral force—always the strongest crime deterrent—and the state is forced to use brute force to maintain order. The loss of legitimacy for the criminal justice system itself not only encourages crime, but destroys social cohesion by exacerbating race and class divisions.

An illustration of this growing divide can be found in the Michigan twin cities that are the setting for Alex Kotlowitz's superb *The Other Side of the River*, now in paperback (Anchor Books, \$14.95). On one bank sits St. Joseph, 95 percent white and filled with quaint antique shops; on the other is Benton Harbor, 92 percent black and so poor that its police cars were repossessed. Their nicknames: Benton Harlem and St. Johannesburg.

Kotlowitz comes to town to investigate how Eric McGinnis, a 16-year-old from Benton Harbor, ended up dead in the St. Joseph River. Was he killed for dating a white girl? Or because he insulted some gang-bangers? Was it suicide? Or did he accidentally drown after slipping into the frigid current?

The answer depends on who he asks and where they're from. Like Cole, Kotlowitz finds perceptions of racial disparities in the criminal justice system at the core of the divisions between the towns. But as he goes deeper into the mystery and both communities, truth becomes elusive. There are no real heroes or villains in this story—just regular folks looking at each other through a prism that reinforces their stereotypes and aggravates years of pent up frustrations. "To those in St. Joseph, Eric's death is proof that race blinds their neighbors to the obvious," Kotlowitz concludes. "To those in Benton Harbor, it is proof that because of race even the obvious is never what it seems."

Looking for easy answers? Maybe next summer. ■



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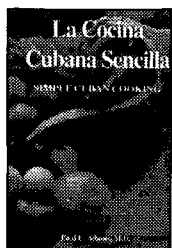


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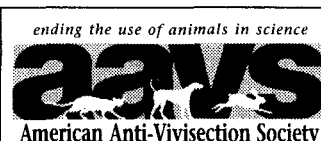
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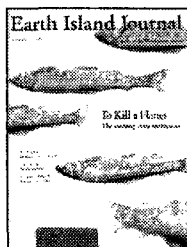
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from the left than from the right," he says. "The right isn't offering any solutions to our problems, but the left is."

**T**he Rio Lempa is the aorta of El Salvador, cutting the country in half on its winding journey from the Honduran border to the Pacific Ocean. It is formidable, legendary, absolutely vital, tragically polluted and—when the skies open up—powerfully destructive.

In November 1998, Hurricane Mitch roared inland from the Caribbean over Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. The hurricane stalled over the region, dumping several days of relentless torrential rain. Many of the Honduran mountain rivers, and most of those in the central zone of El Salvador, feed into the Lempa. As the river swelled, it also threatened to burst the 15th of September hydroelectric dam, 18 miles upstream.

Government authorities misjudged the wrath of the storm. Rural residents were not warned of the dangers. The state-owned electricity generation company, CEL, decided to open the floodgates, after having failed to implement gradual releases in the days prior. The Lower Lempa suddenly was deluged with apocalyptic floods as millions of gallons of water leapt over the riverbanks.

Residents were awakened in the pre-dawn hours to audible roars that some likened to a train, as the floodwaters quickly rose to chest level. Farm animals were swept miles away.

The wartime organizing experience of the refugee communities went into emergency high gear. Just as they had become expert in rapidly evacuating entire villages from advancing army thrusts, the communities now managed to save all their men, women and children from the awesome force of the river. Many waded for miles through the flood, while those who couldn't were rescued by launches and ropes. "It was a major *guinda*," laughs Sara Villega, invoking the colloquial term for the war-time exodus exercise.

Astonishingly, the flood known now and forever here as *la llena* ("the fill-up") claimed no human victims among the zone's 30,000 residents—despite the lack of warning from CEL authorities. Contingency plans had been worked out between the coordinating committee and CEL to have radio contact and a two-hour warning before opening the dam, but the radios were never distributed.

When asked about the poor planning, CEL spokesman Ramon Moreno protests: "The water volume at the 15th of September dam tripled within 18 hours, there was no way to make gradual releases. But we did warn them. We published it in the newspapers that the flood gates would have to be opened."

But in the isolated Lower Lempa, there is no newspaper delivery. While people in the capital city and other parts of the country may have known, those directly affected were

caught unaware. Most of the residents and members of the coordinating committee—wounded on paranoia—believe the massive release was deliberate, and intended as one more measure to convince the people to move away. They say influential economic interests seek to reclaim the zone. "Their actions were unacceptable," says Jose Antonio Maya, the local leader of the Ciudad Romero community. "Before, when the rich owned this land, there were never floods like this." Maria Elena Ayala's family is one of the few that didn't come to settle in the zone after the war. "We've been in this house 40 years, and it never filled up like that before," she says.

**T**here is very little government presence in the Lower Lempa, and no official relief aid came in the wake of the Mitch flood. The disaster coincided with the start of the presidential election campaign, and the ruling ARENA party capitalized on aid distribution, cutting off the opposition-dominated Lower Lempa.

Aid does get through, though, from private groups as well as that from U.S. and European governments administered by non-governmental organizations. Part of these efforts focus on the cultivation of new crops that are less susceptible to flood damage and more profitable in internal markets. This is a

process that takes some persuasion, however, as most of those in the Lower Lempa come from inland regions with generations of history growing corn and beans. A silver lining of Hurricane Mitch, which destroyed the corn crop, has been to break down the stubborn resistance to new plantings. With foreign financing, cooperative efforts are now experimenting with plots of bananas, papayas, loroco, pineapple, maracuya and other coastal crops.

Some have adapted more quickly than others to their new environment. At the riverbank on the edge of the community Las Canoas, Arnaldo Perez emerges from the water with a mask, a homemade harpoon, and string dangling six freshly speared fish. Beaming a broad smile, Perez proudly shows off his harpoon, which he fashioned himself from several dozen rubber bands, file-sharpened scrap metal and a wooden gunstock.

Perez came from the highland Morazan province, where his family had grown corn and cut timber. After a few short years living where the river meets the tidewater, he now also has a boat with a 40-horsepower motor, which he takes out to sea to harvest shrimp. "This is a new life, you have to learn new tricks," he says with a shrug. "Now, if I only had some flippers, I'd get even more fish out of this river."

**Thomas Long** is an El Salvador-based correspondent for The Economist Intelligence Unit and contributes to several other publications. He has covered Central America since 1986.





# Rebuilding in El Salvador

By Thomas Long

SAN MARCOS LEMPA, EL SALVADOR

**T**raffic down the coastal highway stops abruptly at the Lempa River, as cars and trucks from both directions alternate in crossing a rickety one-lane bridge. Rising high alongside is a modern, mechanized bridge being built by the Japanese. Down below, jutting out of the river and twisting along its banks, are the rusted skeletal remains of the Puente de Oro, the "Bridge of Gold." The once-glorious 400-meter suspension bridge was vivid testimony of the ambitious infrastructure projects of military dictatorships since the '40s—and later to the brutal civil war that raged throughout the '80s. It was here that leftist guerrillas struck their first grand blow against the regime, with a spectacular series of detonations that wrenched and toppled the symbol of military government on Oct. 15, 1981.

Nearly 20 years later, the reconstruction of the bridge, and of the lives of thousands of peasant farmers, former guerrilla fighters and ex-army soldiers who have relocated nearby, evokes the past while pointing toward an uncertain future.

With the end of the war in 1992, groups of rebel fighters and their civilian supporters moved into the area to begin new lives. As part of the peace accords, the government finally was obliged to give peasants, combatants and refugees legal title to the agrarian-reform land that was



such a powerful emotional symbol of the conflict.

Not entirely pleased with the arrangement, the right-wing government of then-President Alfredo Cristiani, dominated by wealthy landowners and military officers, sent hundreds of ex-soldiers and their families to take plots in the midst of the leftist refugees. This was done at least partly in the hope that the two groups would continue in conflict. In the beginning, Cristiani's plan seemed to be working. "For the first year or two, they would put up posts and we'd cut them down; we'd put up fences and they'd tear them down, it was rather absurd," recalls Jorge Villatoro, a steadfast member of the Farabundo Marti National

Liberation Front (FMLN), who is also the chief coordinator of 65 communities in the Lower Lempa.

But soon the new residents came to realize how much they had in common: Both sides had been foot soldiers—in many cases cannon fodder—during the war, and both were left to fend for themselves afterward. Soon enough, they came to see the need to organize for mutual benefit.

Luis Ramos spent 20 years in what he vaguely refers to as "territorial service" for the army. Not a regular soldier, he won't say what his duties were, possibly recruiting, possibly intelligence—or worse. His attitudes today are indicative of the flux of social and political ideas during the postwar period. "I always saw the leftists as terrorists, I said I would never sit and talk with any of them, never," says Ramos, who is now on the coordinating committee, which effectively serves as the local government.

Without the distorting filter of wartime hatred, Ramos slowly began to see the level of corruption and fraud in recent governments, and the failure to govern responsibly, or even at all, in areas like the Lower Lempa. "It sounds strange, but now I feel I'm more

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Above: A reforestation project. Left: A meeting of the coordinating committee that serves as the local government. Page 29: A boy casts his line as part of a fishing project.